The Belgrade symposium sought, through the light of the Confessor's symphonic vision, to consider and address critical questions pertaining especially to the realms of theology, philosophy, psychology, science, and hermeneutics, amongst others. The organizers were particularly interested in papers that bring to light new evidence, new readings of texts, or new interpretive paradigms by which the relation between Christianity in antiquity and in the twenty-first century can be profitably explored. Scholars were invited to offer carefully worked out insights and elucidations that bridge the gap between antiquity and modernity and show how Maximus' "symphony of experience" relates to the pressing issues of our times, traversing through the challenging terrain of this theology to gather diverse fruits produced by this giant among early Byzantine theologians, who stands at the summit of the Greek patristic tradition. In an effort to facilitate a wide-ranging, interdisciplinary conversation, the conference encouraged scholars working in any discipline—theology, history, philosophy, art history, religious studies, classical studies—to submit their most recent research. They were invited to interrogate St Maximus' views on metaphysics, cosmology, liturgy, science, spirituality, medicine, mathematics, ethics, and logic, not as independent objects or areas of study, but as interconnected and constitutive elements of a larger whole.

Through this approach, many areas or conditions of contemporary life have been fruitfully explored at this Belgrade "theological banquet" by engaging with the theology of St Maximus the Confessor. These areas formed the foci of the conference: theology and anthropology, exegesis and hermeneutics, modern and ancient philosophy, spirituality and science, history and eschatology, human nature and freedom, otherness and gender, faith and reason, person and communion, psychology and biology, cosmology and physics, pedagogy and sociology, sacraments and Liturgy, asceticism and virtue, and others. The Conference also highlighted Maximus' increasingly noticeable role as a "Saint for East and West" and the mediating potential of his profound theological vision for Eastern and Western Christianity. In an age of plurality and division, it is particularly important to know what our Tradition—shaped by the Fathers—can teach us. In any such endeavor, Saint Maximus the Confessor stands out as the most important theologian of the so-called Byzantine period. Yet his theology, assimilated and incorporated by Tradition, has relevance beyond any single historical period; in fact, the Confessor's efforts to mediate between East and West distinguish his work as vital for contemporary theological discourse.

KNOWING THE PURPOSE OF CREATION THROUGH THE RESURRECTION

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Knowing the purpose of creation through the
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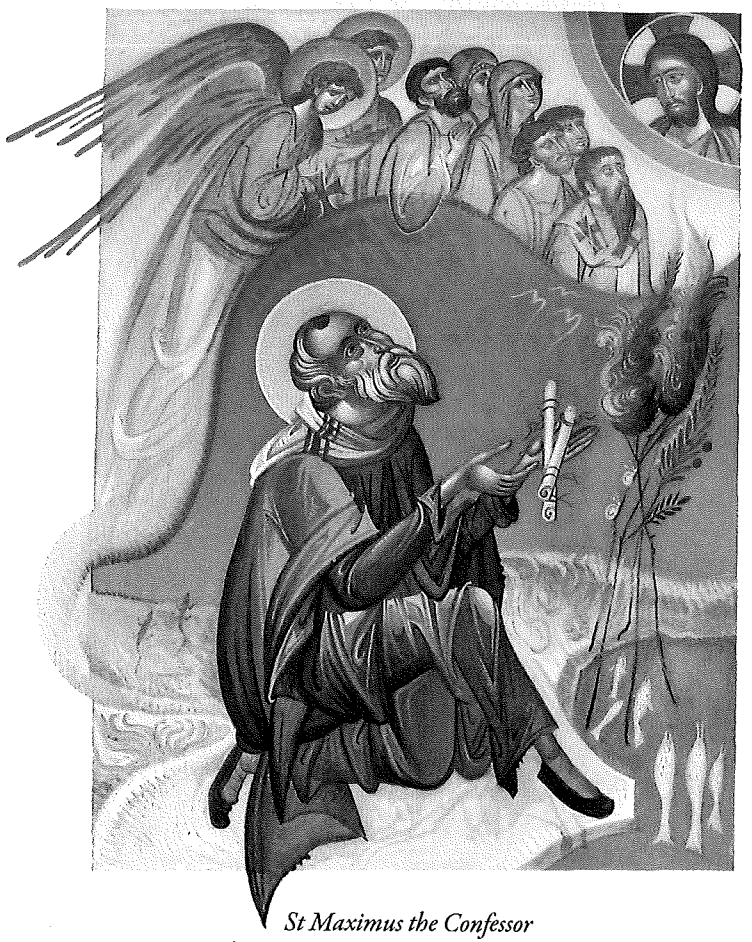

St Maximus the Confessor
George Kordis, egg-tempera on wooden board, 2012.

"The mystery of the incarnation of the Logos is the key to all the inner symbolism and typology in the Scriptures, and in addition gives us knowledge of created things, both visible and intelligible. He who apprehends the mystery of the cross and the burial apprehends the inwards essences of created things; while he who is initiated into the inexpressible power of the resurrection apprehends the purpose for which God first established everything."

St Maximus the Confessor, *Centuries on Theology and Economy* (1.66)

KNOWING THE PURPOSE OF CREATION THROUGH THE RESURRECTION

Proceedings of the Symposium on
St Maximus the Confessor
Belgrade, October 18-21, 2012

Edited by
Bishop Maxim (Vasiljević)

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Preface

The present volume is a collection of presentations delivered at the St Maximus the Confessor International Symposium held in Belgrade at the University of Belgrade from 18 to 21 October 2012.

The primary motivation for organizing this Symposium arose from a desire to suitably honor the commemoration in 2012 of the 1350th anniversary of the repose of St Maximus the Confessor. Inspired by the enthusiasm and support of many scholars, and most notably by Bishop Atanasije of Herzegovina to whom we owe our heartfelt gratitude, the Department of Patristic Studies of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology of the University of Belgrade in Serbia, in collaboration with the Orthodox Christian Studies Program of Fordham University, organized this international symposium on Saint Maximus under the title: "Knowing the Purpose of Creation through the Power of the Resurrection." The title of the conference is based on Saint Maximus' words in his *Centuries on Theology and Economy* (1.66):

> He who is initiated into the inexpressible power of the Resurrection apprehends the purpose for which God first established everything.

A second incentive for the conference, equally important for the organizers, was the awareness that 32 years have passed since the epochal event of that first-ever symposium on St Maximus the Confessor, held in Fribourg, Switzerland, September 2-5, 1980. The twenty-nine studies from that symposium, the work of the leading Maximus scholars of the middle of the twentieth century, were published the following year in *Actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur*, edited by Felix Heinzer and Christoph Schönborn. The resulting book instantly became an indispensible reference volume summing up an entire generation of Maximus studies since they had been re-energized 40 years earlier by the publication of Hans Urs von Balthasar's *Cosmic Liturgy*

in 1941. One of the participants in the Fribourg symposium, Brian Daley, is also a contributor to the Belgrade symposium, thus bridging the whole past generation of Maximian scholarship since Fribourg. In the last decades of the twentieth century, patristic studies as a whole, and the study of various aspects of the theology of Maximus the Confessor in particular, have grown exponentially. Interest in the great Confessor crosses confessional lines. He has become a central point of reference in Orthodox-Catholic dialogue. A major theologian of the Byzantine Church, Saint Maximus is venerated in both Eastern and Western Christian traditions as a theologian of Incarnation and Resurrection in his deepest intuitions. One of the goals of the Belgrade Symposium was therefore to continue the work of the Fribourg Symposium not only by summarizing the current state of Maximian scholarship as it exists in the early twenty first century, but also by highlighting those ecumenical and eirenic elements of St Maximus' teaching that cross confessional lines, and further by drawing on the multi-dimensional light of his theology to engage the issues that are relevant for our time now and into the foreseeable future.

It has often been observed that Saint Maximus preferred to leave "sketches" of his thought—opuscula, chapters, scholia—rather than a thoroughly condensed system. And yet his thought is not unsystematic; rather the "system" of his thought lies in the Christophanic "symphonia" of his theological vision. His "symphonic" exegesis proves to be tremendously critical and fruitful today, as he invites us to discover spiritual benefits in the most obscure corners of Scripture and all reality: integrating theory and practice, he has been called a cosmic theologian, offering a vision of the "cosmic liturgy," inspiring a "cosmological prophecy" and "eucharistic cosmology."

The Belgrade symposium sought, through the light of the Confessor's symphonic vision, to consider and address critical questions pertaining especially to the realms of theology, philosophy, psychology, science, and hermeneutics, amongst others. The organizers were particularly interested in papers that bring to light new evidence, new readings of texts, or new interpretive paradigms by which the relation between Christianity in antiquity and in the twenty-first century can be profitably explored. Scholars were invited to offer carefully worked out insights and elucidations that bridge the gap between antiquity and modernity and show how Maximus' "symphony of experience" relates to the pressing issues of our times, traversing through the challenging terrain of this theology to gather diverse fruits produced by this giant among early Byzantine theologians, who stands at the summit of the Greek patristic tradition. In an effort to facilitate a wide-ranging, interdisciplinary conversation, the conference encouraged scholars working in any discipline—theology, history, philosophy, art history, religious studies, classical studies—to submit their most recent research. They were invited to interrogate St Maximus' views on metaphysics, cosmology, liturgy, science, spirituality, medicine, mathematics, ethics, and logic, not as independent objects or areas of study, but as interconnected and constitutive elements of a larger whole.

Through this approach, many areas or conditions of contemporary life have been fruitfully explored at this Belgrade "theological banquet" by engaging with the theology of St Maximus the Confessor. These areas formed the foci of the conference: theology and anthropology, exegesis and hermeneutics, modern and ancient philosophy, spirituality and science, history and eschatology, human nature and freedom, otherness and gender, faith and reason, person and communion, psychology and biology, cosmology and physics, pedagogy and sociology, sacraments and Liturgy, asceticism and virtue, and others. The Conference also highlighted Maximus' increasingly noticeable role as a "Saint for East and West" and the mediating potential of his profound theological vision for Eastern and Western Christianity. In an age of plurality and division, it is particularly important to know what our Tradition—shaped by the Fathers—can teach us. In any such endeavor, Saint Maximus the Confessor stands out as the most important theologian of the so-called Byzantine period. Yet his theology, assimilated and incorporated by Tradition, has relevance beyond any single historical period; in fact, the Confessor's efforts to mediate between East and West distinguish his work as vital for contemporary theological discourse.

The Belgrade Symposium brought together the following speakers: Demetrios Bathrellos, Grigory Benevitch, Calinic Berger, Paul Blowers, David Bradshaw, Adam Cooper, Brian Daley, Paul Gavrilyuk, Atanasije Jevtić, Joshua Lollar, Andrew Louth, John Panteleimon Manoussakis, Maximos of Simonopetra, Ignatije Midić, Pascal Mueller-Jourdan, Alexei Nesteruk, Aristotle Papanikolaou, George Parsenios, Philipp Gabriel

Renczes, Nino Sakvarelidze, Torstein Tollefsen, George Varvatsoulias, Maxim Vasiljević, Christos Yannaras, and John Zizioulas.

The papers and discussions in this volume of the proceedings of the Belgrade Symposium amply attest to the reputation of Saint Maximus the Confessor as the most universal spirit of the seventh century, and perhaps the greatest thinker of the Church. Twenty eight studies have been gathered in the present volume, which is organized into eight chapters, each of them corresponding to the proceedings of the Symposium, all of which are of intense interest and importance. Chapter One brings to light new evidence regarding the sources, influences, and appropriations of St Maximus' teaching. His mediatorial role as one of the few genuinely ecumenical theologians of the patristic era is acknowledged and affirmed. Chapter Two offers some crucial clarifications on the relationship between person, nature, and freedom. In Chapter Three we find substantial discussion on body, pathos, love, eros, etc. New interpretive paradigms and insights are proposed in Chapter Four, while the next chapter presents the Confessor's cosmological perspective in light of modern scientific discoveries. Some important ontological and ecclesiological issues are discussed in Chapter Six, while in Chapter Seven we are able to see what contemporary synthesis is possible through St Maximus' thought. Chapter Eight offers further readings by engaging younger scholars who did not present their papers at the conference but whose studies were accepted by the organizers. In the two final texts we find an important overview of the Symposium with a description of the conference's flow and a theological interpretation of the frescoes of the Church of Saint Maximus the Confessor in Kostolac, Serbia.

Theology in the mind of St Maximus was never confined to the conceptual and discursive dimension alone; it always aspired to the experience and vision of God in Trinity. Holy Tradition for the Confessor was the living reality of the Presence of God incarnate—and experienced—in ecclesial worship, in revelation, in relics, in sacred images, in words inspired by the Holy Spirit in Scripture and the great teachers of the Church, in the transformative reciprocity of ascesis and prayer. A unique feature of the Belgrade Symposium, impossible to convey in the pages of a book but tangibly experienced by all at the conference, was the specific spiritual-charismatic component given to the gathering

by the grace-filled presence of a precious and holy relic of St Maximus the Confessor. His incorrupt hand was brought from the Holy Mountain of Athos, thanks to the generosity of Hegoumenos Fr. Parthenios of the Monastery of St Paul and the monastery Brothers, and was placed in the Faculty Chapel for veneration throughout the time of the conference. Several other dimensions of the liturgical-canonical heritage of the Church were in evidence throughout the conference in honor and praise of the achievements of St Maximus. He received a Festal *Ekloge*, a hymn (chanted at vigils after the polyeleos) written and set to music by the monks of Simonopetra. New icons of St Maximus were written and brought to the conference for contemplation and veneration. Vigils and services were performed. In this way each person there, participants, students, and the entire gathering, had an opportunity to honor his theology through the sanctuary of our *logoi*, to praise him in new hymns brought from Mount Athos, to contemplate his image on many new icons, to venerate the relic of his incorrupt hand, to participate in a all-night vigil, and even to participate in the consecration of a local church in his name.

We are grateful to all the participants who are contributors of the present volume. We are grateful for the help offered by Sebastian Press, the publishing house of the Serbian Western American Diocese.

Bishop Maxim (Vasiljević)

List of abbreviations

Amb.	*Ambiguorum liber* (*Ambig. Thom.* 1–5) CCSG 48, 3–34; (*Ambig. Ioh.* 6–71) PG 91, 1061–417
Anim.	*Opusculum de anima*, PG 91, 353–61
Ascet.	*Liber asceticus*, CCSG 40
Cap.	*Capita* [= *Diversa capita*], PG 90, 1177–1392
Cap. theol.	*Capitum theologicorum et oeconomicorum duae centuriae*, PG 90, 1084–173
Carit.	*Capita de caritate quattuor centuriae*, PG 90, 960–1073
Disp. Biz.	*Disputatio Bizyae cum Theodosio*, CCSG 39, 73–151
Ep.	*Epistulae* (1–45), PG 91, 361–650
Ep. Anast.	*Epistula ad Anastasium monachum*, CCSG 39, 161–3
Ep. sec. Th.	*Epistula secunda ad Thomam*, CCSG 48, 37–49
Exp. Ps. 59	*Expositio in Psalmum lix*, CCSG 23, 3–22
Myst.	*Mystagogia*, Soteropoulos 19932 [= PG 91, 657–717]
Opusc.	*Opuscula theologica et polemica* (1–27), PG 91, 9–285
Or. Dom.	*Expositio orationis dominicae*, CCSG 23, 27–73
Pyrr.	*Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, PG 91, 288–353
QD.	*Quaestiones et dubia*, CCSG 10
QThal.	*Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, CCSG 7 and 22
QThp.	*Quaestiones ad Theopemptum*, PG 90, 1393–1400
Rel. mot.	*Relatio motionis*, CCSG 39, 13–51

Ἐκλογὴ πανηγυρικὴ εἰς τὸν ὅσιον πατέρα ἡμῶν Μάξιμον τὸν Ὁμολογητήν

Festal *Ekloge* for our Holy Father Maximus the Confessor*

«Τῆς δεήσεώς μου. Ἀλληλούϊα»

1. «Ὑπομένων ὑπέμεινα τὸν Κύριον καὶ προσέσχε μοι, καὶ εἰσήκουσε τῆς δεήσεώς μου» (Ψαλμ. 39, 2). Χαῖρε ὁμολογητὰ Μάξιμε, οὐράνιε ἄνθρωπε, καταφυγὴ τῶν ἐν ἀνάγκαις. Δέξαι ἡμῶν τὸν ὕμνον καὶ τὴν αἴνεσιν, ὅσιε πάτερ, τῶν γεραιρόντων τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ μαρτυρίου σου. Ἀλληλούϊα.

1. *I waited patiently for the Lord, and He attended to me, and hearkened to my supplication* (Ps 39:2). Rejoice, O confessor Maximus, heavenly man, you are our refuge in times of distress! O righteous father, accept our hymn and praise, for we honorably celebrate the way of your martyrdom. Alleluia.

2. «Ὡμοιώθην πελεκάνι ἐρημικῷ, ἐγεννήθην ὡσεὶ νυκτικόραξ ἐν οἰκοπέδῳ» (Ψαλμ. 101, 7). Ὁ ὁσιός σου Κύριε, ὡς ἐραστὴς τῆς σοφίας,[1] ὅλην τὴν οἰκουμένην ὁδεύσας, οὐκ εἶχε ποῦ *τὴν κεφαλὴν κλῖναι* (Ματθ. 8, 20), ἕως οὗ τὴν πνοὴν ἀφῆκεν ἀνδρείᾳ τῇ ψυχῇ. Ἀλληλούϊα.

2. *I have become like a pelican of the wilderness, like an owl in a ruined house* (Ps 101:7). Your righteous one, O Lord, as a lover of wisdom, traversed the whole inhabited world, *but he had nowhere to lay his head* (Mt 8:20), until his last breath, when he expired with courage of soul. Alleluia.

* A hymn written by Fr. Maximos of Simonopetra, and set to music by Fr. Gregory of Simonopetra. The *Ekloge* is chanted at vigils after the *polyeleos*. "Ekloge" means "selection," and thus each musical unit begins with a psalm verse appropriate to the category of saint or feast being celebrated. The English translation is a free rendering of the Greek.

[1] *Ambigua ad Thomam* 1.1.

3. «Διὰ τοὺς λόγους τῶν χειλέων σου ἐγὼ ἐφύλαξα ὁδοὺς σκληράς» (Ψαλμ. 16, 4). Τοῦτο ἀνεφώνησας πολλάκις πάτερ. Ω πάτερ σεπτέ, τὴν φωνὴν τοῦ Λόγου δεχόμενος, Μάξιμε, μέχρις ἀποτομῆς τῆς σῆς γλώσσης ἀλλ᾽ οὐ τοῦ λόγου. Ἀλληλούϊα.

3. *On account of Your words, I have kept ways that are hard* (Ps 16:4). Many were the times when you spoke these words, O venerable father Maximus, but you accepted the Lord's call, and so endured the severing of your tongue, but this did not silence your words. Alleluia.

4. «Τὸ ἀγαλλίαμά μου λύτρωσαί με ἀπὸ τῶν κυκλωσάντων με» (Ψαλμ. 31, 7). Νῦν ἀγαλλιόμενος, Ὅσιε, σῶσόν με ἀπὸ τῶν κυκλωσάντων μέ δαιμόνων. Χαῖρος πάτερ παμμακάριστε, ὑπάρχων ὁδηγός εἰς τὴν πολυκινδυνοτάτην θάλασσαν τοῦ βίου, λύτρωσαι ἡμᾶς τοὺς τιμῶντας σε ἐκ τῶν ἀλλεπαλλήλων κυμάτων τῶν λογισμῶν.[2] Ἀλληλούϊα.

4. *My Joy, deliver me from those that have surrounded me* (Ps 31:7). Now that you are rejoicing in heaven, O righteous one, save me from the demons that have surrounded me. Rejoice, O all-blessed father; being a guide on the dangerous seas of life, deliver us, who honor you, from the endless waves of evil thoughts. Alleluia.

5. «Ἐκοπίασα κράζων ἐβραγχίασεν ὁ λάρυγξ μου, ἐξέλιπον οἱ ὀφθαλμοί μου ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐλπίζειν ἐπὶ τὸν Θεὸν μου» (Ψαλμ. 68,4). Μωϋσὴν μιμούμενος, θεοφάντωρ, διασχίσας τὸ κάλυμμα τῶν αἰσθητῶν, ἀπεκάλυψας τοὺς κεκρυμμένους ἐν τῷ βάθει λόγους τῶν ὄντων, καὶ εἰσέδυς ἐν τῷ γνόφῳ Θεὸν γνωρίζων καὶ Θεὸν γνωριζόμενος.[3] Ἀλληλούϊα.

5. *I am weary of crying, my throat has become hoarse; my eyes have failed from waiting on my God* (Ps 68:4). Imitating Moses, O revealer of God, you parted the covering of the sensible world, revealing the principles of beings hidden in the depths of creation; and you entered into the dark cloud, knowing God and being known by Him. Alleluia.

6. «Βέλος νηπίων ἐγεννήθσαν αἱ πληγαὶ αὐτῶν καὶ ἐξησθένησαν ἐπ᾽ αὐτοὺς αἱ γλώσσαι αὐτῶν» (Ψαλμ. 63, 8). Ὁμολογητά, Μάξιμε, ἐδίδαξας ἡμᾶς Χριστὸν προσκυνεῖν Θεὸν τέλειον καὶ ἄνθρωπον τέλειον, τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν ἑκατέρᾳ οὐσίᾳ, δύο σέβοντες τὰς ἐνεργείας καὶ τὰ θελήματα.[4] Ἀλληλούϊα.

6. *Their wounds were caused by the weapons of children, and their tongues have set them at naught* (Ps 63:8). O Confessor Maximus, you taught us to

[2] *Capita de caritate* 1.52.
[3] *Ambigua ad Iohannem* 10.
[4] *Ambigua ad Thomam* 5; *Opuscula (multa).*

venerate Christ as perfect God and perfect man, One and the same in two essences, and thus we revere two energies and two wills. Alleluia.

7. «Καυχήσονται ὅσιοι ἐν δόξῃ καὶ ἀγαλλιάσονται ἐπὶ τῶν κοιτῶν αὐτῶν» (Ψαλμ. 149, 5). Πατέρων κλέος Μαξιμε, ἀγάπῃ τοῦ ὑπερφήμου θεορρήμονος Γρηγορίου, τὰ ἀπορηθέντα αὐτοῦ λόγια ἐτράνωσας,[5] θεωρήσας ἐν αὐτῷ ὅλον τὸ εἶδος τοὺ ἑνορῶντος Θεοῦ.[6] Ἀλληλούϊα.

7. *The righteous will rejoice in glory, and shall exult on their beds* (Ps 149:5). O Maximus, glory of the Fathers: moved by your great love for St Gregory the Theologian, you clarified his difficult sayings, seeing in him the reflection of the whole form of God, who looks out from within him. Alleluia.

8. «Ψάλλατε τῷ Κυρίῳ οἱ ὅσιοι αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξομολογεῖσθε τῇ μνήμῃ τῆς ἁγιοσύνης αὐτοῦ». (Ψαλμ. 29, 5). Μέγιστε Μάξιμε, ἐκφάντωρ τοῦ Λόγου, τὴν πᾶσαν χύσιν σοφίας εἰσδεξάμενος, ἐν σεαυτῷ ἔδειξας τὸν Θεὸν ταῖς ἀρεταῖς σωματούμενον.[7] Ἀλληλούϊα.

8. *Sing to the Lord, you His saints, and give thanks for the remembrance of His holiness* (Ps 29:5). O great Maximus, revealer of the Logos, you received the whole outpouring of wisdom, showing forth God embodied in yourself by means of the virtues. Alleluia.

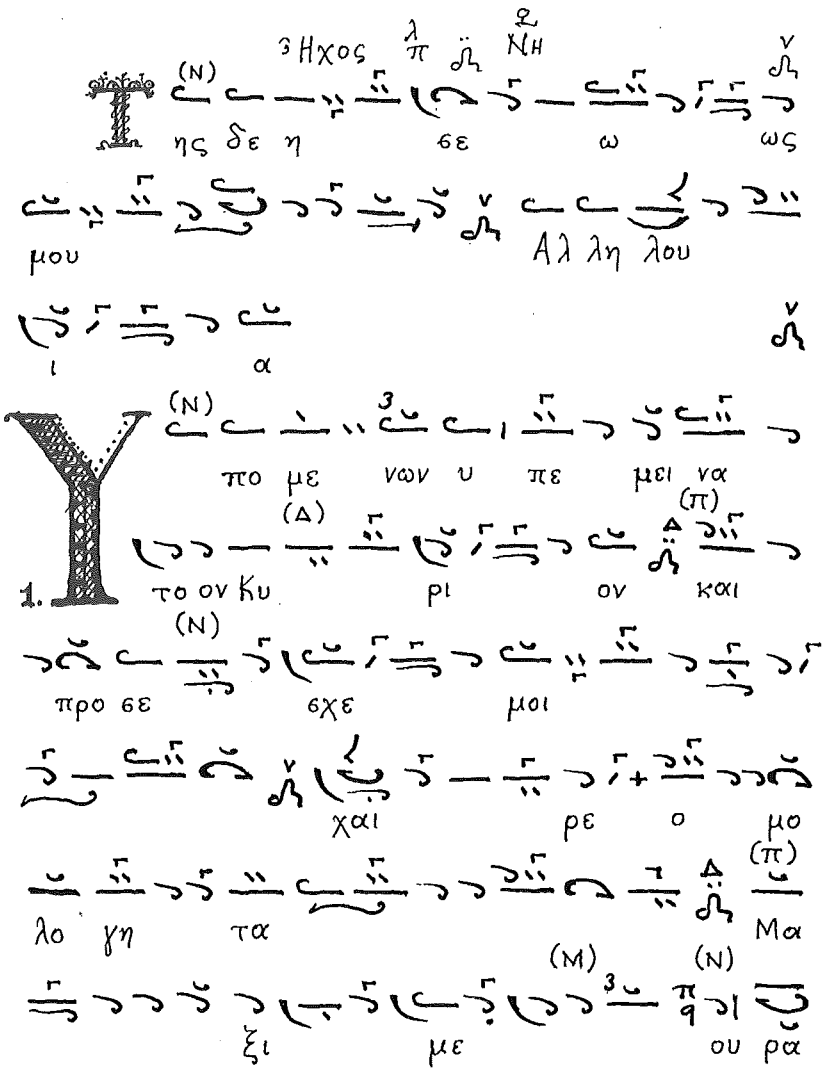
[5] *Ambigua ad Iohannem et Thomam.*
[6] *Ambigua ad Iohannem* 10.
[7] *Ambigua ad Thomam* 1.

ΕΚΛΟΓΗ

πανηγυρική

Εἰς τὸν Ὅσιον πατέρα ἡμῶν

ΜΑΞΙΜΟΝ τὸν ΟΜΟΛΟΓΗΤΗΝ



Αλ λη λου

Αλ λη λου ι α

3. ι α τους λο γου ους των χει

λε ω ων σου ε γω ε φυ

λα ξα ο δου ους σκλη ρα

τα ς του το

α νε φω νη α νε φω νη

σας πολ λα κις πα

τερ ω πα τε ερ σε πτε

την φω νη ην του λο γου δε χο

με νος Μα ξι

Μα ξι με λε

με χρι ις α πο το μη

ης της σης γλω ω σης αλλ' ου του

λο γου

Αλ λη λου

ι α

4. ο α γαλ λι α μα

μου λυ τρω σαι

ηαι με α πο των κυ κλω σα

αν τω ων με

νυ υν α γαλ λι ο με

νο ος ο

εκ των αλ λε παλ λη λων κυ
μω τουςτι μω ων τα ας 39
λυ τρω σαι η μα ας τους τι
λα σα αν του βι ου
κιν δυ νο τα τη ην θα
δη γο ο ο σο εις την πο λυ
στε υ πα αρ χων ο
χαι ροις πα τερ παμμα κα ρι
δαι μο νω ων
με α πο των κυ κλω σα αν τω ων με
ιθ ι ε ω σ 9 α (β)

μα κυ μα των
τω ω ων λο γι σμω
ων
Αλ λη λου ι α
κο πι α σα κρα
5.
ζω ων ε
βραγ χι α σεν ο λα
ρυ υγξ μου ε ξε λι πον οι ο φθα
αλ μοι μου α πο του ε ελ πι ζειν
με ε πι τον θε ο
ον μου Μω ϋ σην μι μου με

με νο ος Α αλ λη λου
ων και θε ω γνω ρι ζο
θε ον γνω ρι ζω η ω
φω
ει σε δυ υς εν τω γνο
θει λο γους τω ων ο ον των και
νου ους εν τω βα
ας τους κε κρυμμε
τω ων α πε κα λυ ψα
σας το κα λυμ μα τω ων αι σθη
νος θε ο φα αν τορ δι α σχι

α
ε λος νη πι ων ε
γε νη θη σαν αι πλη γαι α
αυ των και ε ξη σθε νη σα αν
ε επ' α αυτους αι γλω σαι α αυτω
ων Μα ξι με την κα κην γλωσ σα αλ γι
α αν των αι ρε τι κω ων κα τε
σβε σα ας και ε δι δα
ξας η μας Χρι στο ον προ σκυ νει
εν θε ο ον τε λει ο ον και
α αν θρω που τε λει

I

Sources, Influences, Appropriations

The Mystery of Christ: God's Eternal Gospel, for Man and for the World

Bishop Atanasije (Jevtić) of Herzegovina

The Gospel is the word of eternal life. This means that the Gospel is not simply word but also eternal and also life. The word, insofar as Maximus equates it with the eternal Word of God, is the very Logos, the Son of God, who created all things in the beginning, and is Himself the very Gospel of God. We can see that the word is eternal insofar as the Apostle John in his revelation speaks of the eternal Gospel being carried by an angel (Rev. 14:6).[1] That the Gospel is life, this is clear in itself since it is the eternal living Word of God, the eternal Logos of God, who is eternally begotten of the Father and in Him there was life, and who came into the world as Logos and as the Son of God, who is eternally alongside the Father, with the Father creating all things through Him. And with this the Holy Spirit, together with the Father and the Son, proceeds from the Father and is the eternal Giver of Life. That the Father is Nous, the Logos is Word, and the Holy Spirit is Life—this is what Saint Maximus is referring to in his *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer*, in the *Chapters on Love*, and throughout his other works.

Maximus often makes reference to the Gospel, quotes from the Gospel, witnesses the Gospel, comments on the Gospel, springs out from the Gospel, breathes and lives by the Gospel, crafts both his thoughts and theology through the Gospel. He did not study under

[1] "And yet the *Eternal Gospel* is that which with God is already predetermined in eternity." - St Andrew of Caesarea (*Commentary on the Apocalypse* 14:6. PG 106, 344d).

other teachers, Aristotle, Origen, as well as the Areopagite and others.[2] He rather gathered what he learned from two great Apostles—John and Paul. Revealed to him by John the Evangelist were both faith and theology: that the eternal Logos is the Son of God, the One Who is, the One Who was and Who is yet to come, and that He is the eternal Gospel and eternal Life of the world—and this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (John 17:3). Of course, as neatly put by St Gregory of Sinai (*Ascetical Chapters*, 32), the Holy Spirit is to be understood in this as well.

Similarly, Maximus had also learned the Gospel from the Apostle Paul. This is because the Apostle ubiquitously emphasizes the Gospel when preaching Jesus Christ—the *Crucified* and *Resurrected*—and says that the *mystery of the Gospel* is revealed unto him, and that the mystery is the *mystery of Christ*. This is especially seen in the Letters to the Ephesians and Colossians, but Paul speaks of this in other Letters as well. That is why Saint Maximus the Confessor, with regard to his Gospel, will write, express, proclaim, and witness it inasmuch as the Gospel unites these two Evangelists, John and Paul. Maximus toiled his whole life to express, witness, live, and by his confession testify his very own Gospel. And this is what we said in the beginning, said by St Maximus himself very humbly (*"in my view"*), with regard to the enormity of the content and endless meaning of that *mystery*.

That is, namely: *the mystery of Christ*, in which God as the *Gospel* (*εὐ-αγγέλιον* or *good-news*) has prepared, predetermined, and achieved for us in Christ salvation and eternal life, the eternal deification of man and all creation.

[2] Maximus had read and familiarized himself with many philosophers and Holy Fathers, which can be seen throughout his works. We say this because there exist decent interpreters acquainted with Maximus, for example Polycarp Sherwood (*The Earlier Ambigua of Saint Maximus the Confessor and his refutation of Origenism*, Roma 1955, pp. 88-92; cf. his "Maximus and Origenism. ΑΡΧΗ ΚΑΙ ΤΕΛΟΣ": *Berichte zum XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress, München 1958*. Korreferatezu III, 1, Munchen: Beck 1958, 1-26), who while refuting the thesis of H. U. von Balthasar that Maximus "passed through a certain crisis of Origenism," thinks that Maximus never was himself an Origenist, but rather accepts that the problematic of Origenism provided Maximus with the themes and terminology which he worked with. In our opinion, Maximus draws his theology out from his experience and contemplation of the Theanthropic *Mysteries of Christ*, and that experience, which is alive within the Church, brought him to "clearing the ways of the Lord, and casting aside the stones from their path," as he himself says, quoting the Prophet Isaiah (*Ep.* 2, PG 91, 404C).

Maximus says:

> For this is, in my view, most assuredly, the Gospel of God: God's mission and calling of man through the Begotten Son, by whom we as believers in Him, as the achievement of reconciliation with the Father, are given uncreated deification.[3]

This is to be repeated by St Gregory Palamas.[4]

Let us provide here yet another, broader example of Maximus' position on the Gospel. This is, likewise, taken from his *Questions to Thalassius* 61:

> The Holy Gospel is the origin of creation (γέννημα τῆς ποιήσεως) [ποίημα—Eph. 1:9-10], that is, belonging to God [Christ] by the self-action (αὐτουργίας) of the body, which bears the Kingdom (τὴν βασιλείαν) unto endless ages, and by which we are given imperishable joy and gladness, as a day both without dawning and eternal. For as it said, "this is the day which the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it" [Ps. 117:24]. This day is given the name of the Gospel's grace (τὴν εὐαγγελικὴν χάριν), or the very mystery (τὸ μυστήριον αὐτὸ) of the One who fashioned that same grace. So that by this Mystery, according to the divine Apostle, we may nobly walk as if by day, and that we who believe in Him [Christ] may live in beauty by the nobility of virtue. For He is the One Who is alone created by God (ὁ πεποιημένος ὑπὸ θεοῦ) without seed by the body [Christ by a Virgin], and who renewed [made anew] the established laws of nature (καὶ τῶν κατὰ φύσιν θεσμῶν καινοτομήσας τοὺς νόμους), who is prepared as a revelation before the face of all peoples, and the Light of his people Israel [Luke 2:30-32]. For the Lord is truly the Light of the peoples.[5]

[3] Τοῦτο γάρ, ὡς οἶμαι, τυχόν ἐστι τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον: πρεσβεία θεοῦ καὶ παράκλησις πρὸς ἀνθρώπους δι' Υἱοῦ σαρκωθέντος καὶ τῆς πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα καταλλαγῆς μισθὸν δωρουμένου τοῖς πειθομένοις αὐτῷ τὴν ἀγένητον θέωσιν). (*QThal.* 61, PG 90, 637D).—See also the same in translation on pp. 231 and 366 in our book: *Saint Maximus the Confessor, Life and Selected Works*, Vrnjci-Trebinje- Los Angeles 2012.

[4] PG 151, 745. This is referenced in the *Synodal Tomos*, 57 from 1351 which was put together by Philotheos Kokkinos (later Patriarch of Constantinople), citing the Holy Fathers, and after St Gregory of Nyssa he writes: "That grace is uncreated, the Divinely Inspired Maximus is known to have expounded this clearly and concisely, writing: 'Divine grace and pleasure are given to partakers according to grace, but not by posession/taking (κατάληψις). For in those who attain it in participation it remains unknown (ἀκατάληπτος) , because by nature as uncreated (ἀγένητος/Mg. Ἀγέννητος!) it is limitless." And again (Maximus): "Τοῦτο ἐστὶ τὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ Εὐαγγέλιον· πρεσβεία Θεοῦ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους δι' Υἱοῦ σαρκωθέντος, καὶ μισθὸν δωρουμένου τοῖς πειθομένοις αὐτῷ, τὴν ἀγέννητον θέωσιν" (*QThal.* 61. - PG 90, 637D).

[5] *QThal.* 61, PG 90, 768. See also Maximus' *Opusc.* 4 (PG 91, 57AB): Christ's "philanthropic dispensation of grace for man by appearance [Incarnation] deifies those who by free

Every aspect of the Gospel demonstrates its equivalence with the *Great Mystery of Christ*, the Incarnate One. For this mystery, that is, the Gospel, is truly manifest not only within Christ, but also *as Christ*. And the apostle, together with Saint Maximus, rightly proclaims this as his own Gospel—that Christ is begotten both in the world and for the world, among man and for man, within creation and for all creation. That is why both Paul and Maximus dedicated their entire lives to Christ and to warfare for Christ, for the mystery of Christ-God who appeared in the flesh and in the world (1 Tim. 3:16)—in life, in thought, in action—in defense and in realization of the true faith in Christ, who is both God and Man, the begotten Logos, the true God-man, Theanthropos.

Maximus was someone who learned Christology, beyond doubt, from the apostles and from the Holy Fathers, especially from the Capadocian Fathers, and in particular the Christological faith and theology of Saint Gregory the Theologian. But he is also concretely informed by the Chalcedonian Council, which is why he frequently reiterates the words of the Council at Chalcedon: that within Christ there are *two natures* but in *one Hypostasis*, that the two natures are truly unified within the One Christ, with all of their natural properties, wills, and energies, but that they are unconfused, inexchangable, inseparable, and indivisible.

It is known that in his own personal battle for the sake of true Christology, Maximus first waged war against the Monophysite heresy. In particular, he went up against its main proponent, the heretic Severus of Antioch. The Monophysites, in the time after Justinian, rose up and were even instigated in doing so, to some extent by Justinian himself. In any case, they seemed at some point to have ventured beyond their limit. When Heraclius, the second great ruler after Justinian, arrived he attempted to win them over, since the eastern part of the empire was endangered, with the Orthodox Christians in the East, the Chalcedonians, suffering and being threatened with eradication. Thus Heraclius, along with Patriarch Sergius, and following them the remaining group of bishops, attempted to facilitate peace with compromising "formulae": as if to show the unity of Christ, but to eradicate any trace of the Nestorian separation of Christ—emphasizing and eventually

will venture into [Him], and by the kenosis of the Logos assume His fullness [compare with Col. 2:4-10], through the exercise of virtue."

stressing one energy, one active principle, and even later one will. That is how the heresies of Monoenergism and Monothelitism came about in Maximus' time, as weaker derivations of Monophysitism.

Maximus, together with Saint Sophronius, and afterwards by himself, energetically opposed this theological compromise of faith, i.e., altering the Church's beliefs for the sake of political gain (that being false ecumenism: *unity* at the price of sacrificing the truth—which many today are predisposed to). Many important individuals across the empire were well aware of Maximus' proximity to the emperor and how meaningful his influence was, and he influenced many others as well, wrote extensively, spoke, traveled, promoted the formation of a council, making it even as far as Rome where the Holy Pope Martin in 649 endorsed the creation of a council in the Lateran to condemn the imperial edicts, Heraclius' *Ἔκθεσις* and Constantine's *Τύπος*. That is why he was later persecuted, as was Pope Martin, and was questioned for a long period and with great attention and persistence, as they repeatedly tried to win him over to their side because he was well respected. Yet it is for this very reason that they tormented him even more. By the end, both his right hand and tongue were cut off, and suffering in this manner, he was exiled to Lazika, modern day Georgia, where he reposed in peace in the Lord his God on the 13th of August 662.

Then, the Sixth Ecumenical Council was held in 680. Considering Maximus' repose in 662, eighteen years were still to pass before the Sixth Ecumenical Council, in which Saint Maximus' theology and Christology finally triumphed, though it was never mentioned.[6] But it is only characteristic that the *horos* of the Sixth Ecumenical Council was expressed in the exact same language as the one from Chalcedon: like Chalcedon, it speaks of two natures in one Christ and adds: two energies, two wills, and, again—One Christ,Who evinces both human and divine energies, both human and divine wills.

[6] But by then, for this very reason, the first complete *Vita* of St Maximus was already being written, and not some time later, as the ignorant slanderers of the Holy Confessor say. In this same period, in a demonic offensive against the Church, there appeared a "contra-vita," the miserable Syriac-monophysite *ψόγος*, which was full of lies and slander against this true Holy Father of the Church – "the Third Theologian." The falsehoods and slander of that heretical pamphlet have long been challenged. We, among other things, point to two places in the works of St Maximus where one clearly sees not only that he was not born and raised in Palestine, but that he had never been there in his entire life (*Quest.* II,8 and *Quest.* 162 (I,65). (CCSG 10,166 and 173).

Thus, it can be seen that the Gospel of Christ according to Saint Maximus, which is also according to John and Paul, is at the same time both a patristic and ecclesial Gospel, as was the Gospel and Christology of the Councils of Chalcedon and Trullo (the Sixth Ecumenical Council).

We return again to Maximus' words concerning the Gospel which we find reason to repeat: "For this is, in my view, most assuredly, the Gospel of God: God's mission and calling of man through the Begotten Son, by whom we as believers in Him, as the achievement of reconciliation with the Father, are given uncreated deification."[7]

These words clearly show that God's eternal providence and goodwill (εὐδοκία—Luke 2:14) toward both the world and man was such: so that the Son of God could also become the Son of Man, that the Only begotten One could become the Firstborn among many brethren, and that the grace of the Holy Trinity, who enacts and puts forth the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, could offer both man and the world eternal life, eternal salvation, eternal deification, but also, in the strictest sense, union with Christ, by whom we will be eternally deified: "οὐ λήγομεν ἀεὶ θεουργούμενοι, which means: we never cease being worked on by God."[8]

This is the greatest *Good-news* that God announced, proclaimed, and had given to man and to the world. The Creator—Author and *Evangelist*, orGiver of good-news of this Truth, this Mystery, which surpasses all that which "no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined" (1 Cor. 2:9), is the Incarnate God—the God-man Christ. And its preacher, its announcer, its evangelist—to use the words of Saint Justin of Chelye (Popovic), "the fifth evangelist"—is none other than Saint Maximus the Confessor.

By the example of his life, his works, and his ascetic laboring, Maximus had himself composed a sequel to Christ's Gospel. I recall Father Justin saying: "What reason is there for this peculiar ending to John's Gospel: *Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every*

[7] Regarding the notion of "*uncreated deification*" see the study of P. Christou, "Maximos Confessor on the Infinity Of Man." in: Felix Heinzer – Christoph Scönborn (ed.), *Actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confeseur (Fribourg, 2-5 september 1980)*, Éditions Universitaires, Fribourg Suisse, 1982, pp. 261-271.

[8] See also the rest of *QThal. 22* (PG. 90, 317-324).

one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written (John 21:25)? Is this hyperbole? Not at all! Rather it is every man who is called by God and endowed by God with the ability to expand the Gospel of Christ, which in this regard is our very own Gospel, to uniquely recount the Gospel in one's own life, works, words, and thoughts, thus corresponding with it." Thus Saint Justin hinges upon the boldness of Saint Chrysostom, who said (in reference to the end of the Apostle Paul's first chapter to the Ephesians) that the Church "supplements" Christ, and with the Church being comprised of Saints, that they then supplement Christ. Therefore we allow ourselves to say the same for Saint Maximus: that he supplemented Christ's Gospel, i.e., that he realized it by expressing it as a unique, all-encompassing Truth: that the Great Mystery of God and Great Council of the Holy Trinity—Christ the God-man, that this is the *Gospel* of God—the eternal good-news for both the world and for man.

We should add that, as Saint Maximus himself says (in his *Questions to Thalassius* 60 and elsewhere) and frequently repeats and emphasizes, Christ, the Incarnate Logos and Son of God and Son of Man, within Himself encompasses and embraces His own Body, the Church, and we as Christians are members of the Church, members of Christ. This is not something akin to bodily organs, as if to be impersonal dehumanized. This is conceived pre-eternally and providentially and is manifest in Christ the God-man: we as God-like and Christ-like persons exist and live within the theanthropic communion of the Holy Thrice-hypostatic Trinity.[9] For the Church, in fact, is the communion of the Holy Trinity: the Grace of Christ, who manifests the goodwill of God the Father, and the pre-eternal Love of God the Father for us, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:13). Thus, we have the Great Mystery of piety, as the Apostle Paul mentions of Christ: God was manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16) and attested to this Mystery both in the Church and as the Church, which for this cause is the Pillar and Stronghold of the Truth.

[9] Compare with *Cap. theol.* (*Chapters on theology and oikonomia*) 2,25 (90,1136): "If the God and Father's Son, God the Logos, for this reason became a Son of man and man himself, in order to make them into gods and sons of God, then we believe that this will occur there where Christ Himself now exists as the Head of all flesh (Col. 1:18), becoming the Precursor of the Father for our sake, according to our nature. For God will be in the assembly of gods (Ps. 81:1)—as the saved, who stand in the middle, and are doled out with dignity the bliss of old, spatially unseparated from the righteous."

And this is both one and the same theanthropic *Mystery of Christ*, the eternal *Good-news*, the *eternal Gospel*, which was seen by the Apostle John on Patmos, and whose entire life Saint Maximus was dedicated to in his theology, Christology, and Pneumatology.

That is why Maximus, as "τῶν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας θεοσόφων μυσταγωγῶν",[10] frequently repeats the central tenant of the entire faith and theology of the Church: "Of all the divine mysteries, the most mysterious is the *Mystery of Christ*" (Πάντων τῶν θείων μυστηρίων μυστηριωδέστερον τό κατά Χριστόν ὑπάρχει μυστήριον)."[11]

And this would serve as Maximus'
"ᾠδή ὑπέρ τοῦ Ἀγαπητοῦ" (song of the Beloved).
(Ps. 44:1)

Translated from Serbian by
Dušan Radosavljević

[10] PG. 91, 295b.
[11] *Amb.* 42. PG 91, 1332C

St Maximus the Confessor: The Reception of His Thought in East and West

Fr. Maximos Simonopetrites
(Nicholas Constas)

This paper surveys three historical receptions of the thought and works of St Maximus the Confessor. The first is centered in the early medieval West, and the second and third in the Byzantine East, during the Komnenian and Palaiologan periods, respectively. This is the first attempt to trace a Maximian *Rezeptzionsgeschichte* and aims to illustrate the interpretation of the Confessor's thought in different times and contexts.[1] Maximus was known and studied in other periods and by other writers in addition to those considered below, but the three periods surveyed here witnessed what were surely the most historically important and theologically rich receptions of his work, and thus potentially the most instructive. Knowledge of the past can illumine and inform the present, and it is hoped that this historical survey will contribute to a more thoughtful contemporary reception of a uniquely meaningful and transformative option in theology.

I

Our survey begins in ninth-century Western Europe with two figures—Anastasius Bibliothecarius (ca. 800-879) and John Eriugena

[1] I do not subscribe to the notion, forwarded by some reception theorists, that the existence of multiple receptions and interpretations means that texts have no meanings, or that meaning is produced solely by the reader through his interaction with the text.

(ca. 815-877)—whose common interests in Maximus the Confessor were intertwined with the cultural politics of Rome and the Carolingian court.[2] Moving between Rome and Constantinople, Anastasius played an important role in the transmission of Maximus from Byzantium to the Latin West, primarily through a series of translations.[3] His efforts here include a partial translation of the *Mystagogy*;[4] the translation of a passage from Maximus' letter to Marinos on the procession of the Holy Spirit;[5] and the translation of a collection of seven documents covering events from the time of Maximus' first trial (655) down through his death in Lazica (in August, 662).[6] These latter documents are unique witnesses to the last days of the Confessor's life; they preserve historical information that would otherwise be unknown to us, and record Maximus' final and arguably most mature (if polemical) Christological statements. Anastasius' translations are also important for textual scholars insofar as they pre-date all of the surviving Greek manuscripts. In the

[2] On the cultural and political context, see Michael McCormick, "Diplomacy and the Carolingian Encounter with Byzantium down to the Accession of Charles the Bald," in *Eriugena: East and West*, ed. Bernard McGinn and Willemien Otten (Notre Dame, 1994), 15-48; on the theological and philosophical background, see H. Liebeschütz, "Development of Thought in the Carolingian Empire," in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A.H. Armstrong (Cambridge, 1970), 565-86.

[3] Called "ninth-century Europe's leading expert on Byzantium," Anastasius had a checkered career but eventually became papal archivist and secretary, shaping diplomatic correspondence and policy with Constantinople (*Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* [Oxford, 1991] 1:88). He knew Saints Cyril and Methodios (see below, n. 8) and backed their plans to convert the Slavs. On his life and work as a translator, cf. Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil, CCSG 39, pp. xxvi-xli; and the same authors' *Maximus the Confessor and his Companions: Documents from Exile* (Oxford, 2002), 31-35.

[4] CCSG 69:77-89; cf. S. Pétridès, "Traités liturgiques de S. Maxime et de S. Germain traduits par Anastase le Bibliothécaire," *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 10 (1905): 289-313; 350-64.

[5] The passage is from Maximus' *Ad Marinum presbyterum* = *Opusculum* 10 (PG 91:133D-136C); cf. George Berthold, "Maximos the Confessor and the Filioque," *Studia Patristica* 18.1 (1985): 113-17; Jean-Claude Larchet, *Maxime le Confesseur, médiateur entre l'Orient et l'Occident* (Paris, 1998), 11-75; and Edward Sciecienski, "The Authenticity of Maximus the Confessor's Letter to Marinus: The Argument from Theological Consistency," *Vigiliae Christianae* 61 (2007): 189-237. It has been suggested that, in the West, the compilation of extracts from the works of Maximus originated in a "school" of Maximus in Rome, dating from the time of Pope Theodore (643-649), resulting in florilegia that remained in use down through the Council of Florence; cf. Alexander Alexakis, "The Greek Patristic Testimonia Presented at the Council of Florence (1439) in Support of the Filioque Reconsidered," *Revue des études byzantines* 58 (2000): 149-65.

[6] The collection is available in CCSG 39; for an English translation and commentary, see Allen and Neil, *Documents from Exile* (cited above, n. 3).

case of one document—a letter written by Maximus' disciple—the Latin translation is our sole witness.[7] Finally, while on a diplomatic mission to Constantinople, Anastasius had found and translated a set of *scholia* on the works of Dionysius the Areopagite. He tells us that these were written by Maximus the Confessor and John of Skythopolis, and that, in his translation, he had marked the *scholia* by Maximus with the sign of the cross, to distinguish them from those by John. However, these markings were not retained by later copyists, and the distinction was lost.[8]

Anastasius' role in the transmission of Maximus to the West, which is by no means insignificant, appears rather modest when compared to the work of his younger contemporary, John Eriugena, a polymath theologian, exegete, and Christian Neoplatonist. Eriugena's life is surrounded by many legends, although we can be reasonably certain that he was born in Ireland in the first quarter of the ninth century, where he acquired a remarkable command of Greek. He is believed to have left Ireland in the wake of the Viking invasions, and by 850 we find him in continental Europe, involved in the predestination controversy. His ultimate destination was the Carolingian court, then at the height of its powers, where he was to attain a position of prominence as a philosopher and man of letters.[9]

The court styled itself as a "new Athens," and it was probably with a mixture of amusement and condescension that a Byzantine delegation went there in 827. The ambassadors brought with them a number of gifts, including a manuscript containing the works of Dionysius the Areopagite (*Parisinus graecus* 437), along with a relic of the saint for

[7] I.e., the Letter of Anastasios to the monks of Cagliari (CCSG 39:166-69).

[8] Anastasius, *On the Areopagitica and John Scotus their Translator* = Epistle 2, to Charles the Bald (PL 129:740); cf. Beate Regina Suchla, "Anastasius Bibliothecarius und der Dionysius Areopagita latinus," *Archiv für Mittelalterliche Philosophie und Kultur* 6 (2000): 23-32; and ead., *Ioannis Scythopolitani, Prologus et Scholia in Dionysii Areopagitae* (Berlin, 2011), 45-47; and Diagrams 5-6. See also: L. Michael Harrington, "Anastasius the Librarian's Reading of the Greek Scholia on the Pseudo-Dionysian Corpus," *Studia Patristica* 36 (2001): 119-25; and id., *A Thirteenth-Century Textbook of Mystical Theology at the University of Paris: The Mystical Theology of Dionysius the Areopagite in Eriugena's Latin Translation with the Scholia translated by Anastasius the Librarian* (Paris and Leuven, 2004), 16-22, 26-27. Anastasius further reports that St Cyril (see above, n. 3) had commited the Dionysian corpus to memory; cf. Paul Rorem, *John of Skythopolis and the Dionysian Corpus* (Oxford, 1998), 36, n. 56.

[9] On his life and work, see John J. O'Meara, *Eriugena* (Oxford, 1988); Édouard Jeauneau, *Jean Scot: Commentaire sur l'Évangile de Jean*, SC 151 (Paris, 1972), 29-34; and Diedre Carabine, *John Scottus Eriugena* (Oxford, 2000).

the abbey of St Denis.[10] At the request of Charles the Bald (823-877)—Charlemagne's grandson and a Hellenophile patron of the arts—Eriugena translated the Dionysian corpus into Latin, a project that occupied him for more than two years (860-862).[11] Eriugena struggled with the translation and sought help from Anastasius, who had close ties to the Carolingian court. Anastasius found Eriugena's translation too literal, conserving in Latin linguistic structures proper to Greek, with the result that "what he translated still needed to be translated."[12] Anastasius made corrections on the translation, and in the margins copied the *scholia* of John of Skythopolis and Maximus. For Eriugena, the *scholia* were a godsend. In the translation's dedicatory letter to Charles the Bald, Eriugena acknowledged that had not "Maximos elucidated the most obscure sayings of Dionysios," he would never have been able to "enter into such dense darkness." He considered it nothing less than an act of "divine mercy and providence" that what was "hidden and im-

[10] These gifts were presented to Louis the Pious' court at Compiène in September 827, but would seem to have been primarily intended for Hilduin, Louis' chief advisor and head of the imperial chapel, who also happened to be the abbot of St Denis in Paris, where he was campaigning to prove that the patron saint of his abbey was the disciple of St Paul. The reception of the manuscript and relic, which was accompanied by a number of miracles, enabled Hilduin to demonstrate the identity of the two Dionysii, a view subsequently adopted by the Byzantines themselves; cf. T.C. Lounghis, *Les ambassades byzantines en Occident depuis la foundation des Etats barbares jusqu'aux croisades* (Athens, 1980), 143-68; Ysabel de Andia, "Denys L'Aréopagite à Paris," in ead., *Denys L'Aréopagite: Tradition et Metamporhoses* (Paris, 2006), 143-45; and McCormick, "Carolingian Encounter," 31-32.

[11] Cf. John Marenborn, "Wulfald, Charles the Bald, and John Scotus Eriugena," in *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom*, ed. M.T. von Gibson (London, 1981), 375-83; and Édouard Jeauneau, "La prudence et la lenteur," in id., *Quatre Thèmes Érigéniens* (Montreal and Paris, 1978), 82-83. Eriugena made use of the earlier translation by Hilduin (see above, n. 10), produced ca. 827-834, which is often said to have been deemed unsatisfactory, but cf. G. Théry, *Études Dionysiennes I: Hilduin, Traducteur de Denys* (Paris, 1932), 73. Eriugena also produced a commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy*, ed. J. Barbet, *Iohannis Scoti Eriugenae: Expositiones in ierarchiam coelestem*, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis 31 (Turnhout, 1975); cf. Paul Rorem, *Eriugena's Commentary on the Dionysian Celestial Hierarchy* (Toronto, 2005); and B. McGinn, "The Negative Element in the Anthropology of John the Scot," in *Jean Scot Érigène et l'histoire de la philosophie*, ed. R. Roques (Paris, 1977), 313-25.

[12] *Quem interpretaturus susceperat, adhuc redderet interpretandum* (MGH 7:431), cited in CCSG 39, pp. xxxix-xl; cf. O'Meara, *Eriugena*, 51-79. At the Symposium, Fr. Andrew Louth drew my attention to a parallel remark by Coleridge, who refers to Thomas Taylor's translation of Proklos' *Platonic Theology* as "so translated that difficult Greek is translated into incomprehensible English" (letter to Lady Beaumont, CL III 279); cf. James Vigus, *Platonic Coleridge* (Oxford, 2009), 34, n. 97. I am thankful to Professors Charles Rzepka and Björn Bosserhoff for providing me with the exact citation.

penetrable" in Dionysius was "revealed through the brilliant explanations of the all-wise Maximos."[13]

In light of this providential discovery, the attention of the court shifted to Maximus, and no sooner had Eriugena completed his translation of the *corpus Dionysiacum*, than Charles the Bald commissioned him to translate the major works of the Confessor. Eriugena consequently spent the next two years translating the *Ambigua to John* (between 862-864), followed by two more years translating the *Questions to Thalassios* (864-866), after which he translated Gregory of Nyssa's *On the Making of Man*.[14] Such a large number of translations from Greek into Latin was

[13] "I would not have entered into such dense darkness (cf. Ex 20:21) had I not seen that the most blessed Maximos had very often in the course of his work introduced, and in wondrous manner elucidated, the obscurest of the most holy Dionysios' sayings (the symbolic and theological meanings of which I translated recently at your bidding), so much so that I do not doubt that Divine Mercy, which illumines all things hidden in the darkness, has by its ineffable providence arranged this so that those things in the books of the blessed Dionysios which were for us the most hidden, and impenetrable, and which seemed to elude our grasp, might be revealed through the most-brilliant explanation of the aforementioned most-wise Maximos" (CCSG 18:3, lines 15-25).

[14] Eriugena's Latin translation of the *Ambigua to John* has been critically edited by Édouard Jeauneau, *Maximi confessoris Ambigua ad Iohannem iuxta Iohannis Scotti Eriugenae latinam interpretationem* (CCSG 18); cf. id., "La traduction érigénienne des Ambigua de Maxime le Confesseur: Thomas Gale et le Codex Remensis," in *Jean Scot l'Érigène et l'histoire de la philosophie. Laon, 7-12 juillet 1975 (Colloques internationaux du C.N.R.S. 561)* (Paris, 1977), 135-44; id., "Jean Scot Erigène et le grec," *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 41 (1979): 5-50; id., "Jean l'Érigène et les *Ambigua ad Iohannem* de Maxime le Confesseur," in *Maximus Confessor. Actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur. Fribourg, 2-5 septembre 1980*, ed. Felix Heinzer and Christoph Schönborn, (Fribourg, 1982), 343-64; id., "Pseudo-Dionysius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Maximus the Confessor in the Works of John Scottus Eriugena," in *Carolingian Essays: Andrew W. Mellon Lectures in Early Christian Studies*, ed. Uta-Renate Blumenthal (Washington, D.C., 1983), 137-49, reprinted in id., *Etudes érigéniennes* (Paris, 1987), 189-210; id., "Jean Scot, Traducteur de Maxime le Confesseur," in *The Sacred Nectar of the Greeks: The Study of Greek in the West in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. M.W. Herren (London, 1988), 257-76; J. Dräeseke, "Maximus Confessor und Johannes Scotus Erigena," *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 84 (1911): 20-64, 204-29; P.E. Dutton, "Raoul Glaber's *De divina quaternitate*: An unnoticed reading of Eriugena's translation of the *Ambigua* of Maximus the Confessor," *Medieval Studies* 42 (1980): 431-53. Eriugena's translation of the QTh is available in CCCSG 7 & 22; cf. P. Meyvaert, "The Exegetical Treatises of Peter the Deacon and Eriugina's Latin Rendering of the *Ad Thalassium* of Maximos the Confessor," *Sacris Erudiri* 14 (1963): 130-48; and Carl Laga, "A Complete Graeco-Latin Index of Maximus Confessor's *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*," in *History and Eschatology in John Scottus Eriugena and His Time*, ed. James McEvory and Michael Dunne (Leuven, 2002), 169-81. On Eriugena as a translator, see René Roques, "Traduction ou interprétation? Brèves remarques sur Jean Scot traducteur de Denys," in id., *Libres sentiers vers l'erigénisme* (Rome, 1975), 99-130; O'Meara, *Eriugena*, 51-79; and Catherine Kavanaugh, "The Philosophical Importance of Grammar for Eriugena," in *History and Eschatology*, 61-76. If Eriugena's translations

remarkable at this time (to say nothing of the difficulty of the works involved). As noted above, Eriugena was an extremely faithful translator, generally translating word for word, and, whenever possible, reproducing the original syntax and other features of the source text. Whereas Eriugena's method of translation did not produce elegant Latin prose, it has proven to be of inestimable value for modern scholars. Because the oldest surviving Greek manuscripts containing the *Ambigua to John* and the *Questions to Thalassios* are from the late tenth and mostly eleventh centuries, Eriugena's ninth-century translations are by far the oldest surviving witnesses to these works, and are of the highest importance for establishing the Greek texts, especially for the *Ambigua to John*.[15]

For Eriugena, Maximus opened the door to a new universe, and marked a decisive stage in the evolution of his thought.[16] The result of this profound and sustained immersion in the writings of the Confessor—and in the theology of the Greek Fathers more generally—was his *magnum opus*, the *Periphyseon*. A synthesis of theology, philosophy, cosmology, and anthropology, the *Periphyseon* explores universal nature in its division into four aspects or species, unified around Maximus' doctrine of God as first and final cause, so that nature as a whole is understood as a procession from and return to God.

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The structure of the *Periphyseon* is heavily dependent on the division of reality set forth in *Ambiguum* 41, a text which Eriugena translates and comments on extensively in the second book.[17] Eriugena's

of Maximus were not widely copied or read, his Periphyseon was, and became a vehicle of transmission for Maximus' ideas in the West, on which see the essays in Werner Beirwaltes, ed., *Eriugena Redivivus: Zur Wirkungsgeschichte seines Denkens im Mittelalter und im Übergang zur Neuzeit* (Heidelberg, 1987); and O'Meara, *Eriugena*, 198-212.

[15] Eriugena's Greek manuscripts, which must have been very early uncials, dating perhaps to the seventh-century, may have come from North Africa via Rome or Southern Italy; cf. McCormick "Carolingian Encounter," 22-23. It is to be greatly regretted that, unlike Eriugena's Greek manuscript of the *corpus Dionysiacum* (i.e., Parisinus gr. 437), the early uncials containing the text of the *Ambigua to John* and the *Questions to Thalassios* do not appear to have survived.

[16] If the *Periphyseon* contains twice as many direct quotations from Nyssa's *On the Making of Man* than from either the *corpus Dionysiacum* or the *Ambigua to John*, it has been suggested that this is because Eriugena had not assimilated Nyssa's thought as completely as he did that of Dionysios or Maximus; cf. O'Meara, *Eriugena*, 56; and Jeauneau, "Liste des *Ambigua* cites par Jean Scot" (CCSG 18, pp. lxxix-lxxx).

[17] *Periphyseon* 2, 529C-536A; cf. 5, 893BC; English translation by John O'Meara, *Eriugena, Periphyseon (Division of Nature)* (Washington, D.C., 1987), 129-36. The English translation by Myra L. Uhlfelder, *Periphyseon: On the Division of Nature* (Eugene, 1976), provides only a paraphrase of this section.

understanding of *Ambiguum* 41 is different from that of many modern scholars, and it will be worth opening up a small parenthesis in order to take a closer look at it. According to Maximus, the "substance of all things" (τὴν πάντων ὑπόστασιν) is divided into (1) not created/created, the latter into (2) intelligible/sensible, the latter into (3) heaven/earth, the latter into (4) paradise/inhabited world; in place of the expected division of the inhabited world, there is a division of (5) male and female which takes a more elaborate form. On the one hand, man is divisible into male and female, but on the other he constitutes a recapitulation of all the previous divisions, functioning as an agent of continuity, exercising a power of unification, and containing the harmony of different natures—a recapitulation occurring pre-eminently in the humanity of Christ. As Eriugena sees it, this fivefold division and recapitulation is not ontological or even physical (whatever that might mean), but cognitive and semantic in character.[18]

To be a principle unifying the division of cognitive objects is for Eriugena a key function of recapitulation. In commenting on Maximus' text, he observes that the unification of the inhabited world with paradise is perhaps "believed" (*credatur*) to take place, but that the unification of sensibles with intelligibles is possibly "in intellect only" (*in intellectu solummodo*). In fact, Eriugena understands both unifications as essentially cognitive in nature, so that the unification of natural substances occurs in the intellect alone, since for him existent things are thoughts primarily of God and secondarily of man. In his development of Maximus' doctrine in *Periphyseon* 2, he argues not only that the human mind contains a "concept" (*notio*) of all intelligibles and sensibles, but that this concept is the "substance" (*substantia*) of those intelligibles and sensibles (and was the basis, for example, of Adam's ability to name all the animals).[19] Eriugena's interpretation is markedly different from

[18] Ibid. 2, 529D-531A; trans. O'Meara, 129-31; cf. ibid. 2, 535B: "Formerly he (i.e., Maximus) spoke of a certain unification into unity of all the sensibles and the intelligibles, so that nothing would remain in them that was separable, nothing that was corporeal, but that the lower natures would pass into the higher; but now he seems to say that the unification of natural substances in the intellect alone, but not in the things themselves" (O'Meara, 135).

[19] Cf. O'Meara, *Eriugena*, 93-104; Edouard Jeauneau, "La divisione des sexes," *Eriugena Colloquium* (Heidelberg, 1980), 33-54; Stephen Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena: An In-*

that of many modern commentators, whose interest in *Ambiguum* 41 is generally limited to questions of gender, which seems reductive, not to say superficial, when compared to Eriugena's philosophical analysis.

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Eriugena was not sure how his work would be received and in the final pages acknowledges his own s ense of foreboding.[20] His instincts proved to be correct, and the *Periphyseon* was criticized and condemned for pantheism in 1050, 1059, 1210, and 1225. Three years after the *Periphyseon* was first printed by Thomas Gale at Oxford in 1681, it was placed on the *Index of Prohibited Books.*[21]

In a thinker as difficult and complex as Eriugena, one cannot but expect to find different perspectives, divergent evaluations, and sometimes direct disagreements among his interpreters. Some commentators see Eriugena as essentially a Greek thinker writing in Latin,[22] while others argue that, despite his use of Greek patristic sources, he remained an Augustinian.[23] Still others contend that his work is marred by an insurmountable conflict between Augustine and Dionysius,[24] or by his failure to integrate Maximus' christology into his ontology.[25] The influence of Augustine notwithstanding, it seems clear that Eriugena was more Greek than Latin in his use of the distinction between created and uncreated and in the emphasis he gave

vestigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition (Leiden, 1978), 255, n. 239; and id., *Concord in Discourse: Harmonics and Semiotics in Late Classical and Early Medieval Platonism* (Berlin, 1996), 217-19.

[20] *Periphyseon* 5, 1021B-1022C; trans. O'Meara, 713-15.

[21] I.P. Sheldon-Williams, "Johannes Scottus Eriugena," in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, ed., A.A. Armstrong (Cambridge, 1967), 533. Note that, as an appendix to the *Periphyseon*, Gale published the *Ambigua to Thomas* and a small portion of the *Ambigua to John*.

[22] Cf. Sheldon-Williams, "Johannes Scottus Eriugena," 520: "Thus (Eriugena) fortuitously became acquainted with three of the most important documents of Greek Christian Platonism (i.e., Dionysios, Maximos, and Nyssa); the effect of their influence upon him was to bring him as wholly into the Greek tradition as if he had been a Byzantine writing in Greek, and to make of him the agent through whom the Western world came into this valuable inheritance."

[23] R. Crouse, "*Primordiales Causae* in Eriugena's Interpretation of Genesis: Sources and Significance," in *Iohannes Scottus Eriugena: The Bible and Hermeneutics*, ed. G. Van Riel, C. Steel, and J. McEvoy (Leuven, 1996), 209-20.

[24] Giulio d'Onofrio, "The Concordance of Augustine and Dionysius: Toward a Hermeneutic of the Disagreement of Patristic Sources in John the Scot's *Periphyseon*," in *Eriugena East and West,* ed. McGinn and Otten, 115-40.

[25] Eric Perl, "Metaphysics and Christology in Maximus Confessor and Eriugena," in *Eriugena East and West,* ed. McGinn and Otten, 253-70.

to the idea of deification, which he says was difficult for his fellow Latins to understand.[26] In philosophical terms, it seems safe to say that the *Periphyseon* is a fusion of Latin and Greek Neoplatonisms, that is, an extension of the primarily Plotinian and Porphyrian Platonism of Augustine in the direction of ideas from Iamblichus, Syrianus, Damaskios, and especially Proklus, as transmitted by Dionysius and Maximus.

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As the first major reception of the thought of St Maximus the Confessor, the work of Anastasius and Eriugena presents certain patterns that will become characteristic of many subsequent receptions. It is noteworthy that whereas both men were translators, each had different aims and employed different translation strategies. At issue are not simply two different methods of translation, but what we might call two different sociologies of translation. If Eriugena is working with what modern translation theorists would call a "natural equivalence paradigm," Anastasius' criticisms of Eriguena indicate that he himself is working with a paradigm of "asymmetric directional equivalence."[27] This means that Anastasius' work is shaped, not by the linguistic features and purpose of the "source" text, but by the interests of the audience for whom the translation is targeted, and is thus a "re-purposing" of the original source material.[28] Adaptation theorists, moreover, would see in Anastasius' work an example of transculturation or indigenization, which is essentially a process of simplification, like transcribing orchestral music for the piano, or adapting a novel for television. Such adaptation is a pro-

[26] Cf. Eriugena, *Periphyseon* 5, 1015C: "The use of this word, deification, is very rare in the Latin books ... I am not sure of the reason for this reticence: perhaps it is because the meaning of this word theosis (the term which the Greeks usually employ in the sense of the psychic and bodily transformation of the saints into God so as to become One in Him and with Him, when there will remain in them nothing of their animal, earthly, and mortal nature) seemed too profound for those who cannot rise above carnal speculations, and would therefore be to them incomprehensible and incredible." See also: Paul A. Dietrich and Donald F. Duclow, "Virgins in Paradise: Deification and Exegesis in *Periphyseon* V," in *Jean Scot Écrivain*, ed. G.-H. Allard (Montreal, 1986), 29-49.

[27] Cf. Anthony Pym, *Exploring Translation Theories* (London, 2010), 6-24, 25-42. These categories are essentially modern forms of the *ad verbum—ad sensum* debate that has characterized the translation of Greek texts into Latin since antiquity; cf. Daniel Weissbort, ed., *Translation: Theory and Practice* (Oxford, 2006), 17-33.

[28] Although this relates less to any deliberate mistranslation of lexical items than it does to the motivations behind the selection of texts for translation; cf. Pym, *Exploring Translation Theories*, 43-63.

cess in which the adapter exerts cultural power over what he adapts, so that the translated works are palimpsests revealing more about the context of reception than the content of the original source text.[29]

Translations of Maximus' works are as necessary today as they were in the ninth century. That scholars are introduced to texts largely by way of translations can be confirmed by a footnote check of recent articles on Maximus the Confessor, which for the most part cite only those works or passages that have been translated into modern languages. Scholars are institutionally rewarded for promoting novel theories and interpretations of texts, but the limited range of citations in many secondary studies raises a question about the depth of their engagement with the actual primary sources. As we saw in the case of Eriugena, originality followed, not from the use of isolated passages drawn from an anthology (and deployed essentially as proof texts), but from the long and hard work of sustained translation, which reoriented the basic categories of his thought and made him one of the most innovative thinkers of the early Middle Ages.[30] One finds a striking modern analogue to Eriugena in the work of Fr. Dumitru Staniloae (1903-1993), whose translations of Maximus' writings into Romanian had a profound impact on his thought, making him undoubtedly the most "Maximian" of all modern Orthodox theologians.[31]

The partial translations produced by Anastasius, on the other hand, present us with a rather different situation, insofar as their very selection was motivated by the confessional politics of the day. Historians are unanimous in affirming that Anastasius' primary aim as a translator was to "reinforce the authority of the Western Church."[32] In addition

[29] Cf. Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York, 2006), 141-53.

[30] That translation cultivates a range of intellectual virtues has been argued by Simon Chau, "Hermeneutics and the Translator: The Ontological Dimension of Translating," *Multilingua* 3 (1984): 76-77 (cited in Pym, *Exploring Translation Theories*, 111), who claims that translators are affected in the following ways: 1) they become more humble through their existential awareness of limitation in relation to the translation; 2) they become more honest, as they realize that neither their reading nor their rendering are canonical; 3) they become more responsible as they realize the active, creative role of the interpreter in shaping the meaning of a text.

[31] See the contribution to this volume by Fr. Calinic Berger.

[32] Not only against the Byzantines, but also against powerful bishops such as Hincmar of Reims, who resisted Roman authority over the Frankish church; cf. CCSG 39, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv. The same factors influenced the saints' lives he chose to translate; cf. Bronwen Neil, *Seventh-Century Popes and Martyrs: The Political Hagiography of Anastasius Bibliothecarius* (Turnhout, 2006).

to serving as the personal advisor to Pope Nicholas, he also counseled Louis II, encouraging him to believe that the Byzantine emperors, because of their heresies, had ceased being emperors of the Romans.[33] Actively involved in the *filioque* controversy between Pope Nicholas and Patriarch Photios, Anastasius translated Maximus' remarks on the procession of the Holy Spirit (mentioned above) in order to defend the orthodoxy of the Latin position. This extract has had a long history of citation and use, down through the Council of Florence and beyond.[34] Roman Catholic scholar Pauline Allen, who has edited and translated the collection of anti-monothelite documents (also mentioned above), states that Anastasius' selection of texts for translation represents a "conscious effort to put the Roman church in a position to sustain, on a cultural level, the conflict with Byzantium,"[35] and that the decision to "translate the documents concerning the life of Maximus the Confessor relates to the ongoing struggle for power between Rome and Constantinople."[36] Anastasius himself tells us that his translations were done "for the recognition and power of the Apostolic See against those who are bent on violently extorting something from it."[37]

We would be less than honest if we were to maintain that the modern study of St Maximus the Confessor is free of confessional biases or that it has not been shaped by ideological frameworks that are extrinsic, anachronistic, and contrary to the Confessor's own intellectual concerns and theological commitments. Not unlike the act of translation itself, confessionally and ideologically oriented scholarship engages in an aggressive, inherently appropriative movement that is essentially invasive and exhaustive. In Saint Jerome's famous metaphor, meaning is brought home captive by the translation, like a slave taken in a war. Yet acts of linguistic betrayal and cognitive violence are often balanced by acts of restitution. To classify a text as worthy of translation and commentary is to dignify it, to magnify its stature, and to enrich its significance in new formats and contexts. Translation can

[33] CCSG 39, p. xxiv.

[34] Cf. Larchet, *Maxime*, 12, n. 4 (cited above, n. 5), who notes that the passage figures in modern pronouncements from the Vatican.

[35] CCSG 39, p. xxxv.

[36] Ibid., p. xxxvi.

[37] *Et agnoscendae potestatis Apostolicae Sedis, contra eos qui ab ipsa quid violenter extorquere nituntur* (from *Parisinus latinus* 5095, fol. 5v, cited in CCSG 39, p. xxxvii, n. 100).

enhance the work by inferring new possibilities, by identifying elemental reserves that would not otherwise have been realized. This is so even when a translation or interpretation is only partly adequate, since the failings of the translator and the interpreter alike serve to localize the opaque centers of specific genius in the original. The inevitable damage generated by our translations and commentaries calls for and can be balanced by compensation, a response to the demand for equity in the hermeneutic process.[38]

II

The ninth-century Carolingian *renovatio* closely mirrored the contemporary revival of arts and letters known as the "Macedonian renaissance" (ca. 850-1000), which launched the intellectual flowering known as the "Komnenian renaissance" (ca. 1000-1204). It was within the arc described by these two periods that the "classic" form of Byzantine culture was established, and both periods are marked by strong interest in St Maximus the Confessor, who has been called the first "Byzantine" theologian, and the "father" of "Byzantine" theology.[39] This interest reached its zenith in eleventh- and twelfth-century Constantinople, to which our survey now turns.[40]

It will be instructive to begin with the evidence of the manuscripts. In the Komnenian period, interest in St Maximus the Confessor was

[38] Here I am helpd by the remarks of George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (Oxford, 1998), 312-18.

[39] E.g., John Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought* (Washington, D.C., 1969), 99: "In fact, Maximus can be called the real father of Byzantine theology ... for it was only through his system that the valid traditions of the past found their legitimate place and were preserved"; and id., *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York, 1974), 37: "Maximus the Confessor dominates the period intellectually, and, in many respects, may be regarded as the real Father of Byzantine theology," for his "doctrine of deification based on Cyril's soteriology and Chalcedonian Christology." More recently, Andrew Louth, "Apophatic and Cataphatic Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Mysticism*, ed. A. Hollywood (Cambridge, 2012), 142, has described Maximus as "the greatest of Byzantine theologians."

[40] The thirteenth-century fresco of St Maximus by Panselinos (in the church of the Protaton, Mt. Athos), which bears little resemblance to his earlier iconography, must surely owe something of its remarkable character to the Komnenian "rediscovery" of the Confessor as a speculative thinker and mystic; cf. E. Voordeckers, "L'iconographie de saint Maxime le Confesseur dans l'art des Églises de rite byzantin," in *Philohistor* (Leuven, 1994), 339-59; and Peter van Deun, "Suppléments à l'iconographie de Maxime le Confesseur dans les arts byzantin et slave," in *La spiritualité de l'univers byzantin dans le verbe et l'image. Hommages offerts à Edmond Voordeckers* (Leiden, 1997), 315-31.

found in the highest levels of Byzantine society, and created a demand for *de luxe* copies of his writings commissioned by wealthy monasteries and aristocratic patrons.[41] Maximus' writings, which were not previously available in a single volume,[42] were systematically assembled and published in a definitive edition of his collected works, which modern scholars refer to as the "Constantinopolitan edition" of the works of Maximus the Confessor.[43] The earliest evidence we have for this edition dates to the tenth century,[44] although the earliest surviving copies, such as *Angelicus graecus* 120,[45] and *Vaticanus graecus* 1502,[46] are from the eleventh century. These manuscripts are the basis for all subsequent copies and editions of the works of Maximus, and they have much to

[41] See, for example, the account of Anna Komnena, *Alexiad* V.9, who describes her mother, Irene Doukaina, reading Maximus at the table during meals in the royal palace; translated by E.R.A. Sweter, *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena* (London, 1969), 178-79.

[42] Photios, a ninth-century reader of Maximus, notes in his *Library* (ed. René Henry, *Photius, Bibliothèque*, vol. 3 [Paris, 1962]) that he had read: (i) the *Questions to Thalassios* in a (single?) book or volume (βιβλίον) (cod. 192a; p. 74); (ii) a (separate?) collection of twenty-seven letters (cod. 192a; pp. 80-83); (iii) a separate volume (τεῦχος) containing the *Liber Asceticus* that was "bound with" (συνετέτακτο) "various letters" (ἐπιστολαὶ διάφοροι), along with what appears to be the *Chapters on Theology and the Incarnation* (cod. 193; pp. 83-85), as well as "two letters to Thomas" (i.e., the *Ambigua to Thomas* and the *Second letter to Thomas*) (p. 87); (iv) (another?) volume (τεῦχος) containing the letter to "Marianos" (not "Marinos") (cod. 195; p. 88), and the *Dialogue with Pyrrhus*. While clearly pointing to the lack of a single edition, the evidence provided by Photios should not be taken as the last word on what works by Maximus (and in what form) were available in ninth-century Constantinople. For example, Photios does not mention the *Ambigua to John*, although it was known to his older contemporary, Nikephoros of Constantinople, who cites a passage from *Ambiguum* 46 in his *Refutation and Overthrow of the Definition of the Iconoclast Synod of 815* (CCSG 33:96); and in id., *Testimonia patrum* (ed. J.B. Pitra, *Nicephori Antirrhetica*, vol. 1 [Paris, 1852], 344-45).

[43] Directly related to the compilation of this edition is the work of Euthymios the Athonite (ca. 950-1028), who at this time began to translate the works of Maximus into Georgian, an activity that continued through the twelfth century; cf. Lela Khoperia, "Maximus the Confessor: Life and Works in the Georgian Tradition," in *Maximus the Confessor and Georgia*, ed. Tamila Mgaloblishvili and Lela Khoperia (London, 2009), 25-58.

[44] Raphael Bracke, "Two Fragments of a Greek Manuscript containing a Corpus Maximianum: Mss. *Genavensis graecus* 360 and *Leidensis Scaligeranus* 33," *The Patristic and Byzantine Review* 4 (1985): 110-14.

[45] The standard catalog description is that of G. Muccio and P. Franchi De Cavalieri, *Index codicum graecorum Bibliothecae Angelicae in Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica* 4 (1896): 159-61; reprinted in Christa Samberger, ed., *Catalogi codicum graecorum qui in minioribus bibliothecis italicis asservantur in duo volumina collati et novissimis additamentis aucti*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1968); cf. CCSG 7, pp. xlvii-xlviii.

[46] The standard catalog description is that of Robert Devreese, *Codices Vaticani Graeci* II (codd. 330-603) (Rome, 1937), 338-49; cf. CCSG 7, pp. l-liv.

tell us about the transmission of Maximus' thought through the end of the Byzantine period.[47]

The popularity of the new edition, and the availability of multiple copies, led to the diffusion of Maximian excerpts in eleventh-century florilegia, such as the *Florilegium Barrocianum* and the two florilegia compiled by John Oxites.[48] It was also during the eleventh century that the so-called *Diversa Capita,* or *Various Texts on Theology, the Divine Economy, and Virtue and Vice,* was compiled. This is not an actual work by Maximus, but an anthology of 500 chapters taken primarily from the *Questions to Thalassios* and the *Ambigua to John,* along with a smaller amount of material from the Letters and the *scholia* on Dionysius.[49] (In the *Philokalia,* the *Diversa Capita* is presented as an extension of the *Two Hundred Chapters on Theology and the Incarnate Dispensation of the Son of God.*) Another eleventh-century work, the popular monastic compilation known as the *Evergetinos*, contains more than 200 extracts from the works of Maximus.[50] A lesser known but in many ways more interesting example is a book of Gospels (*Vaticanus graecus* 349) dated to the twelfth century, containing hundreds of exegetical *scholia.* Of the 138 *scholia* on the Gospel of John, 86 (or 62%) are from the works of Maximus, as follows: 33 from the *Ambigua to John*; 2 from the *Ambigua to Thomas*; and 47 from the *Questions to Thalassios.* Some of

[47] On which, see the important study by Elisabetta Sciarra, "Massimo Confessore tra Constantinople l'Athos," in *Oltre la scrittura. Variazioni sul tema per Guglielmo Cavallo*, ed. D. Bianconi (Dossiers byzantins 8) (Paris, 2008), 143-65.

[48] Cf. Marcel Richard, "Florilèges spirituels grecs," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 5 (Paris, 1964), 475-512, esp. 494-95, and 504-5.

[49] The compilation of the *Diversa Capita* (PG 90: 1177A-1392C) has been dated to the eleventh century by Wilhelm Soppa, *Die Diversa Capita unter den Schriften des heiligen Maximus Confessor in deutscher Bearbeitung und quellenkritischer Beleuchtung* (Dresden, 1922); cf. M.-Th. Disidier, "Une oeuvre douteuse de saint Maxime le Confesseur" *Échos d'Orient* 30 (1931): 160-78. See also Peter Van Deun, "Les *Diversa Capita* de Pseudo-Maxime et la chaine de Nicétas d'Héraclée sur l'Évangile de Matthieu," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen byzantinistik* 45 (1995): 19-24. The sources of the *Diversa Capita* are conveniently summarized in the *Philokalia*, vol. 2 (London, 1981), 50.

[50] J.H. Declerck, "Les citations de S. Maxime le Confesseur chez Paul de l'Évergétis," *Byzantion* 55 (1985): 91-117. The *Evergetinos* was compiled between 1048-1054, by Paul, the founder of the Evergetinos monastery. It is a four-volume work, covering fifty subjects (or *hypotheseis*). Maximus is cited a total of forty-nine times (nine times in vol. 1; ten times in vol. 2; fifteen times in vol. 3; and fifteen times in vol. 4), but because each "citation" is usually a cluster of texts, the total number of citations is well over two hundred, most of them from the *Chapters on Love* and the rest from the *Chapters on Theology and Economy*, and the *Liber Asceticus.*

the connections here are quite intriguing, such as the use of *Ambiguum* 22 (PG 91:1257A14-B12)—a key passage on the intellect's perception of the *logoi*—as a gloss on John 1:18 ("No one has ever seen God"). The extracts from the *Ambigua* represent a fascinating exegetical use of a text that was not written as a commentary on Scripture and awaits a detailed theological study.[51]

These examples, however, of which many more could be given, do not tell the whole story, since interest in Maximus in this period was by no means confined to monastic or even ecclesiastical circles. Copies of the new edition were also being studied by lay intellectuals, especially those involved in the contemporary revival of Neoplatonism.[52] As is well known, this revival provoked a major debate concerning the relationship of philosophy to theology, with lines being drawn between lay intellectuals and the higher clergy (the latter enjoying the backing of the staunchly Orthodox court).[53] Both sides appealed to the authority of St Maximus, but whereas the lay intellectuals found in his writings a point of departure for their strictly philosophical projects, the higher clergy and the court read them as a theological corrective to philosophy's claims to autonomy. These divergent interpretations are represented by two of the Confessor's most important readers at this time: Michael Psellos and Isaak the Sebastokrator.

Michael Psellos (1018-1081) and his pupils dominated the intellectual life of eleventh-century Byzantium. Psellos was well read in Maximus, and drew extensively on the Confessor's writings.[54] Like Maximus, Psellos commented on the orations of Gregory the Theologian[55] and

[51] Bram Roosen, "Maximus Confessor and the *Scholia in Iohannem* in Codex *Vaticanus Graecus* 349," *The Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 54 (2002): 185-226. The *scholion* on John 1:18 is no. 21 in Roosen's catalogue and may be found on p. 152 of his study.

[52] A veritable "Proklos renaissance," according to G. Podskalsky, "Nicholas von Methone und die Proklosrenaissance in Byzanz (11.12 Jh.)," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 42 (1976): 509-23.

[53] On which, see the remarks of Paul Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos*, 1143-1180 (Cambridge, 1993), 366-412.

[54] B. Lourié, "Michel Psellos contre Maxime le Confesseur: l'origine de l'"hérésie des physéthésites," *Scrinium* 4 (2008). On Psellos' philosophical work in general, see John Duffy, "Hellenic Philosophy in Byzantium and the Lonely Mission of Michael Psellos," in K. Ierodiakonou, *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources* (Oxford, 2002), 138-56.

[55] Cf. E.V. Maltese, "Michele Psello commentator di Gregorio di Nazianzo: Note per una

also made additions to the Maximian *Catena of the Three Fathers on the Song of Songs*.[56] Yet Psellos gave Maximus no position of predominance in his thought (indeed, he gave no such position to any Church Father), and his interest in Gregory the Theologian is more literary than theological. That he typically refers to St Maximus as a "philosopher" betrays his real interests, which are in secular philosophy.[57] He tells us that he studied Aristotle, Plato, Plotinos, Porphyry, Iamblichos, and Proklos.[58] Fascinated by all things Egyptian, he claims he could read hieroglyphics, and his devotion to the *Chaldean Oracles* brought him into an occult world of magic, theurgy, astrology, and alchemy, all of which he officialy denied but privately seems to have practiced. He was also interested in paranormal phenomena, including the nature and activity of demons.[59] In a revealing aside, he speaks disparagingly of Maximus and expresses his preference for Plato.[60] In the writings of the Confessor, Psellos had a ready framework for a Christian appropriation of Neoplatonism. This, however, was the path not taken, and he con-

lettura dei Theologica," in *Syndesmos: Studi in onore di Rosario Anastasi*, vol. 2 (Catania, 1994): 289-309; Panayiotis Agapitos, "Teachers, Pupils, and Imperial Power in Eleventh-Century Byzantium," in *Pedagogy and Power: Rhetorics of Classical Learning*, ed. Y.L. Too and N. Livingstone (Cambridge 1998), 170-91.

[56] I. Kirchmeyer, "Un commentaire de Maxime le Confesseur sur le Cantique?" *Studia Patristica* 8 (1966): 406-13.

[57] Cf. John Duffy, "Reactions of Two Byzantine Intellectuals to the Theory and Practice of Magic: Michael Psellos and Michael Italikos," in *Byzantine Magic*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington, D.C., 1995), 83: "The extraordinary thing about Psellos is that, single-handedly, he was responsible for bringing back, almost from the dead, an entire group of occult authors and books whose existence had long been as good as forgotten. Between the time of Photios in the ninth century and the arrival of Psellos in the eleventh century, one would be hard put to find in extant Byzantine sources any references to Hermes Trismegistus and the *Hermetica*, to Julius Africanus and the *Kestoi*, to Proclus' *De Arta Hieratica*, or to the *Chaldean Oracles*, that is, the authors and works that were the classics in the field of mysticism and magic."

[58] Not content with the academic study of philosophy, Psellos appears to have conducted actual experiements, a tradition continued by the "school" driven by Anna Komnena, members of which were drawn to the natural sciences and biology.

[59] Cf. Nigel Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium* (Baltimore, 1983), 159-60; and Darin Hayton, "Michael Psellos' *De daemonibus* in the Renaissance," in *Reading Michael Psellos*, ed. Charles Barber and David Jenkins (Leiden, 2006), 193-216. Psellos' *De operatione daemonum*, translated into English by Sir Charles Nicholson in 1845, has recently been re-published by Golden Hoard Press (2010), which specializes in magic and the occult. The work was published in its "Source Works of Ceremonial Magic Series."

[60] Psellos, Opusc. 78 (ed. Paul Gautier, *Michaelis Pselli, Theologica* I [Leipzig, 1989], pp. 313-16; cf. p. 313, lines 107-17).

sequently found himself in opposition to his own Church. As it happened, the renewed interest of Psellos and other Byzantine intellectuals in secular philosophy coincided with the renewed zeal for Orthodoxy under the Komnenian emperors. Psellos narrowly escaped a charge of heresy, although his student, John Italos, was not so fortunate.[61]

Isaak the Sebastokrator (b. ca. 1050 - d. 1102/04), the older brother of Alexios I (1056-1118), was, like Psellos, a man of multiple interests, including Neoplatonism. He authored three treatises *On Providence* that borrow heavily from the writings of Proklos, yet this is not a case of mere copying.[62] At a very basic level, Isaak rewrites Proklos, substituting the word "God" for "gods," and "natural necessity" (φυσικὴ ἀνάγκη) for "fate" (εἱμαρμένη). When incorporating larger extracts from Proklos, Isaak suppresses entire passages and replaces them with material from Christian writers, not to camouflage his pagan sources, but to produce a work of genuinely Christian philosophy. Toward this end, he relies especially on St Maximus the Confessor,[63] and draws from the *Mystagogy*, the *Questions to Thalassios*, the *Ambigua to John*, the *Chapters on Love*, and the *Gnostic Centuries* in the creation of a judicious synthesis of philosophy and theology. To give but one example, he transforms Proklos' "single nature of (cosmic) law" (ἡ μία τοῦ νόμου φύσις) into the "principle of each nature" (ὁ τῆς ἑκάστου φύσεως λόγος), using Maximus' doctrine of the *logoi* to "personalize" the universe and

[61] On Italos, see J.M. Hussey, *Church and Learning in the Byzantine Empire: 867-1185* (New York, 1937), 73-102; Robert Browning, "Enlightenment and Repression in Byzantium in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," *Past and Present* 69 (1975): 3-23; L. Clucas, *The Trial of John Italos and the Crisis of Intellectual Values in Byzantium in the Eleventh Centuries* (Munich, 1981); cf. below, n. 65.

[62] Isaak's writings, which contain extensive extracts from Proklos, are an important textual witness for three of the philosopher's works (*Ten Doubts Concerning Providence, On Providence and Fate, On the Existence of Evils*), which are extant only in an unintelligible Latin translation made by William of Moerbeke; cf. Carlos Steel, "Un admirateur de S. Maxime à la cour des Comnènes: Isaac le Sébastocrator," in *Maximus Confessor: Actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur, Fribourg, 2-5 septembre 1980*, ed. Felix Heinzer and Christoph Schönborn (Fribourg, 1982), 365-73; and idem., "Isaac Comnenus: How to Integrate the Views of Proclus, Pseudo-Dionysios, and Maximus on the Different Modes of Knowledge of the Soul," which is an appendix to his study, "Maximus Confessor on Theory and Praxis. A Commentary on *Ambigua ad Iohannem* VI (10) 1-19," in *Theoria, Praxis and the Contemplative Life after Plato and Aristotle*, ed. Thomas Benatouil and Mauro Bonazzi (Brill, 2012), 229-257 (= pp. 255-57). My remarks on Isaak are indebted to Steel's 1982 study.

[63] And, to a lesser extent, on Dionysius, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Philoponos.

to allow a greater scope for human freedom.[64] The influence of Maximus on Isaak is pervasive, and the obvious conclusion is that he uses Maximus to Christianize Proklos. This was quite unlike the approach of Psellos and his disciples, and it was not long before the two schools came into open conflict. In 1082, by the order of Alexios I, Isaak presided over a mixed court of laity and clergy that found John Italos guilty of heresy.[65]

From the Carolingian renaissance to the eleventh-century revival of Neoplatonism, the writings of St Maximus the Confessor have exercised a powerful attraction for philosophers and philosophically oriented theologians. As we saw in the case of Eriugena and Psellos, such attractions are not without their hazards. Though philosophy has sometimes been seen as a natural complement to theology, the two disciplines have at other times regarded each other as mortal enemies. How a particular culture (or thinker) defines the relationship between philosophy and theology is often a form of shorthand for a more general division in human thought and experience, encoding fundamental beliefs about human autonomy, authority, and proprietary rights on a "nature" to which each discipline claims to have access. In a brief but important aside, Maximus reveals something of his own understanding of the question. In a discussion of "quality, property, and difference," he says that:

> Among secular philosophers the meaning of these terms varies considerably, and it would take too long to explain their many differences of opinion. ...Among the divine Fathers, however, the explanation of these terms is compact and concise and is not applied to some substrate, that is, to some essence or nature, but to those things that are contemplated in the essence, and indeed, in the hypostasis.[66]

[64] Radek Chlup, *Proclus: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 2012), 12-14, describes what he calls the "closed" nature of the Neoplatonic universe, which marks a considerable narrowing from the world of the Middle Platonists, who had more room for randomness, unpredictability, and human freedom, which the later Neoplatonists reduced to a kind of fatalistic determinism.

[65] Italos was condemned in special anathemas appended to the order of the service for the Sunday of Orthdoxy. He is named only in the last of a series of eleven anathemas, but all of them are aimed at him. Against the background of Maximus' thought, the first and second anathemas seem especially relevant; cf. Jean Gouillard, "Les procès official de Jean l'Italien les actes et leurs sous-entendus," *Travaux et Mémoires* 9 (1985): 133-179; Hussey, *Church and Learning*, 91-95; and ead., *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford, 1990), 142-46. Some modern historians have anachronistically interpreted the affair of Italos as a struggle between "enlightenment" and "repression," and consequently dismiss what they believe was a mere "show trial" of an intellectual dissident; but that the trial was heavily politicized does not minimize the importance of the theological charges.

Two things here are significant for our discussion: the value ascribed to clarity and concision over the obfuscations of jargon and prolixity and, more importantly, a redefinition and novel application of the philosophical terms in question. Theology, in other words, critically transforms both the form and content of secular philosophy. Maximus' fluency in Neoplatonic Aristotelianism is truly impressive, but he himself is not simply another late-antique Neoplatonist commentator on Aristotle.[67] His aim is not to extend the tradition of the philosophers into Christianity but with the re-engineered tools of philosophy to elucidate the tradition of the Fathers and the Councils. His fundamental themes are not arranged according to the assumptions of worldly wisdom, but according to the order of a life in whose midst the Word and Wisdom of God wills to be born.[68] Part of the difficulty in situating the work of Maximus in relation to philosophy is that the Confessor presents us with a philosophical theology having no real precedent or parallel in the Greek patristic tradition. Yet this philosophical theology (if one may call it such) is, in the first place, an irreducibly *Christian* theology because its primary intention is the elucidation of faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior. In a more limited and qualified way, it is also a *Platonic* theology, in the sense

[66] *Opusc.* 21: «Λέγω γοῦν περὶ ὧν ἐκπαιδεύοντες προσεξετάζειν παρακελεύσασθε, ποιότητος, φημί, καὶ ἰδιότητος καὶ διαφορᾶς, πολυσχεδῆ μὲν τούτων παρὰ τοῖς ἔξω τυγχάνειν τὴν σημασίαν καὶ μακρὸν ἂν εἴη τὰς ἐν τούτοις ἐκείνων διαιρέσεις ἐξαπλοῦν ... τοῖς δὲ θείοις πατράσιν συνεχῆς τε καὶ σύντομος ἡ τούτων καθέστηκε δήλωσις, οὐκ ἐπί τινος ὑποκειμένου λαμβανομένη, τουτέστιν οὐσίας καὶ φύσεως, ἀλλὰ τῶν τῇ οὐσίᾳ καὶ μέντοι γε τῶν τῇ ὑποστάσει θεωρουμένων» (PG 91:248BC). Note also Maximus' disagreement with the "theories of the Greeks" in the *Chapters on Love* 4.6 (ed. Aldo Ceresa-Gastaldo, *Massimo Confessore, Capitoli sulla Carità* [Rome, 1963], 196, line 4).

[67] Thus Ladislav Chvátal, "Maxime le Confesseur et la tradition philosophique: à propos d'une definition de la *kinesis*," *Studia Patristica* 48 (2010): 121-22: "Bien que l'on puisse relever une forte resemblance systématique avec les commentateurs néoplatoniciens d'Aristotle ... on ne trouve nulle part, dans les textes philosophiques anciens, une formulation développée du movement pareille à celle propose par Maxime."

[68] Cf. Gregory Palamas, *Triads* 1.1.11: "If one of the Fathers says the same things as the secular philosophers, this is only on the level of the words (ῥήματα), since the concepts (νοήματα) are very different, for the Fathers, consistent with what Paul says, have 'the mind of Christ' (1 Cor 2:16), whereas the philosophers, at best, speak from human reason, which is 'as far from the mind of God as heaven is from the earth' (cf. Is 55:9)" (ed. Meyendorff, pp. 33-35, cited below, n. 71).

that it found in the Platonic tradition a systematic and speculative language that could be adapted and transformed for the deeper penetration and expression of the faith of the Church.

III

The final stop on our survey is the Late Byzantine period, where we find Maximus close to the center of the Hesychast controversy. The dispute between Barlaam and Gregory Palamas (b. ca. 1296 - d. 1357) in many ways mirrors the quarrel between philosophy and theology that arose during the Komnenian period. Among the Hesychasts, Maximus is received, not as a philosophical thinker, but as a theologian of the spiritual life. The text most frequently cited is the *Ambigua to John*, a work that modern scholars often reductively construe as a refutation of Origenism[69] but which the Hesychasts understood as an authoritative treatise on the experience of God and the nature of divinization.[70] The debate unfolded around the problem of human rationality and the ability of the mind to know God, which was directly related to the nature of divine grace and especially of the divine light as seen by the Disciples at the Transfiguration.

The question of knowledge emerged at the very outset of the controversy and is treated in the first book of Palamas' trilogy known as the *Triads*.[71] Barlaam claimed that the "inner principles (λόγοι) of creation," which are grounded in the "divine, primal, and creative mind," have corresponding "images" (εἰκόνες) in the soul. He believed that knowledge of these images could be obtained through science and philosophy and would consequently lead to direct knowledge of God.[72] Palamas rejects such a view, contending that it is "rather unfitting for a man to believe that he has discovered the inner principles within the mind of the Creator," since Paul says: "Who can know the mind of the Lord?" (Rom 11:34). He concludes that, if one cannot know the inner principles of the divine mind, then neither can one know their images by means of secular wisdom (*Triads* 1.1.2-3).

Readers of Maximus will hear in these arguments an echo (to say the least) of the Confessor's signature doctrine of the *logoi*, and may therefore be surprised by Palamas' seemingly summary dismissal of it. When Palamas returns to these arguments in *Triads* 2.1.27-30, he resorts to the traditional Stoic categories of "common concepts" and makes no mention of "inner principles" at all. In *Triads* 2.3.54, Palamas comments on a passage in Dionysius' *On Mystical Theology*, where the Areopagite distinguishes "God" from the "place of God" (cf. Ex 24:10). In an interesting aside—cited by Palamas—Dionysius states that, "I think that this ('place') means that the most divine and highest realities that are beheld and contemplated are certain *hypothetikoi logoi* of things subject to Him who transcends all, through which His wholly inconceivable presence is shown forth."[73] It is not immediately clear what Dionysius means by this phrase, which could be taken as a reference to the *logoi* as the underlying, intelligible grounds of the universe. If so, it is rather striking that Palamas passes over it in silence.[74] On the other

[69] Beginning with the influential study by Polycarp Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of Saint Maximus the Confessor and His Refutation of Origenism* (Rome, 1955), which to this day remains the only monograph on the *Ambigua to John*.

[70] Palamas, for example, in the *Triads*, cites the *Ambigua to John* around twenty times, whereas the *Questions to Thalassios* are cited only six times, according to the index of Panayiotis Christou: *Amb* 7.12 (PG 91:1076C); *Amb* 7.26 (1088C); *Amb* 10.25-29 (1125-1128); *Amb* 10.42 (1137); *Amb* 10.47 (1144BC) (cited five times in all); *Amb* 10.63 (1160); *Amb* 10.76 (1165B-1168D); *Amb* 10.78 (1168A); *Amb* 10.80 (1168C); *Amb* 10.112 (1200B); *Amb* 15.3 (1216C); *Amb* 20.3 (1237D); *Amb* 20.6 (1241); *Amb* 54.2-3 (1376C-1377B); and *Amb* 71.6 (1413AB). Other texts that figure in the debate are the *scholion* on Dionysius the Areopagite, DN 5.8 (PG 4:325AC); the *scholion* on *Letter* 9 (PG 3:497-A); the *Two Hundred Chapters on Theology and the Incarnate Dispensation of the Son of God* 1.7, 1.49, 2.1 (PG 90:1085B; 1101A; 1125C); and other passages noted below.

[71] For the general background, see Robert Sinkewicz, "Gregory Palamas," in *La Théologie Byzantine et sa tradition*, ed. G.C. Conticello and V. Conticello (Turnhout, 2002), 131-37. References to the *Triads* are from the edition by John Meyendorff, *Grégoire Palamas, Défense des saints hésychastes* (Louvain, 1959).

[72] *Triads* 1, First Question (ed. Meyendorff, pp. 5-7).

[73] *Triads* 2.3.54 (ed. Meyendorff, p. 499), citing Dionysius, *Mystical Theology* 2 (144, lines 5-8). John Parker, *The Works of Dionysios the Areopagite* (London, 1897), 132, renders *hypothetikoi logoi* as "a sort of *suggestive expression* of the things subject to Him Who is above all"; Colm Luibheid, *Pseudo-Dionysius, The Complete Works* (New York, 1987), 137, as "the *rationale which presupposes* all that lies below the Transcendent One" (p. 137) (emphasis added); John Meyendorff (ibid., p. 498) simply as "allusions"; and Panayiotis Chrestou, *Dionysios o Areopagites* (Thessaloniki, 1986), 481, more freely as «σπερματικοὶ λόγοι.»

[74] Palamas may have had in mind the *scholion* of John of Skythopolis, at least part of which identifies the "place of God' not with the *logoi* but with angels: "By *hypohetikoi logoi* he means the descriptive or contemplative principles of beings that lie below God, since it is through them, that is, through their permanence and preservation, that we learn that all things are present to God, not by moving from one place to another, but by providence. The 'place' of God is the celestial, intellective beings that are around God, and which God transcends" (PG 4:420D). The phrase appears in Neoplatonic commentaries on Aristotle's *Categories*, such as that by Porphyry, who illustrates it by naming "Bucepahlos" as a horse, and "Socrates" as a man, realities that are not found "in" a substrate, for they are not accidents but substances, nor are they "according to"

hand, if the doctrine of the *logoi* is understood as establishing real analogies between creation and the mind of the Creator, then it is easy to see why Palamas avoided it, since positing any kind of continuity between God and creatures would have tended to support the general import of Barlaam's argument. Yet the differences between Palamas and Barlaam go much deeper than this, for even if the *logoi* are the grounds both of creation and human rationality, they are not themselves objects of knowledge (in the way that Barlaam seems to have imagined), but rather the conditions for knowledge, and as such are to be transcended in the experience of divine union.[75]

It is to be regretted that the scholastic-humanist assault on Hesychasm prevented Palamas from developing Maximus' doctrine of the *logoi* into an Orthodox *analogia entis*, according to which God and creatures would *not* be brought under the same general category of being and which would account fully for their irreducible differences. Instead, Barlaam's untenable claims for the ability of unaided human reason to know the mind of God made it necessary for Palamas to stress the discontinuity between human and divine reason and to reiterate Maximus' emphasis on the *cessation* of all cognitive activity—sense perception and intellection alike—in the experience of union with God.[76]

substrate, for they are "not predicated of a part," but are rather "simple, non-compounded descriptive principles" (CAG 4/1:76, lines 34-38); and Simplikios, who says that a *hypothetikos logos* "defines a property of substance" (CAG 8:22, lines 14-19; 29, lines 21-23).

[75] Modern scholarship has raised the question of the *logoi* primarily in relation to the essence-energies distinction, and whereas various answers have been proposed, the matter remains under discussion. That Maximus and Palamas are responding to different questions and working in different theological contexts (i.e., cosmology vs. the theology of God), is a valid point made by J. van Rossum, "The logoi of Creation and the Divine Energies in Maximus the Confessor and Gregory Palamas," *Studia Patristica* 27 (1993): 213-17, although this seems a rather facile way to argue that their theologies are essentially incompatible; cf. the same author's unpublished dissertation, "Palamism and Church Tradition: Palamism, Its Use of Patristic Tradition, and Its Relationship with Thomistic Thought" (Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1985), 68-80. Lars Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos: The Vision of St. Maximos the Confessor* (Crestwood, 1985), 137-43; David Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West: Metaphysics and the Division of Christendom* (Cambridge, 2004), 221-62 (= "Palamas and Aquinas"); Jean-Claude Larchet, *La théologie des énergies divines. Des origines à saint Jean Damascène* (Paris, 2010), 331-421; and Torstein Tollefson, *Activity and Participation in Late Antique and Early Christian Thought* (Oxford, 2012), 185-206, argue for greater continuity between Maximus and Palamas. I was not able to consult K. Savvidis, *Die Lehre von der Vergöttlichung des Menschen bei Maximos dem Bekenner und ihre Rezeption durch Gregor Palamas* (St. Ottilien, 1997).

[76] Palamas takes up this question toward the end of the first *Triad* (1.3), citing, among other things, Maximus, *Second Century on Theology* 88 (PG 90:1168A). The argument is essen-

The second question, concerning the nature of the light of the Transfiguration, provides Palamas with the opportunity for a more fruitful and creative engagement with the thought of Maximus. In the third *Triad,* Palamas sets forth the Orthodox teaching on divinization and on the light of Thabor as the uncreated energy of God.[77] Palamas underlines the eternal reality of the divine light, and of divine grace more generally, by describing it as "enhypostatic." Palamas explains that the "grace of divinization is 'enhypostatic' not in the sense of being 'independently self-existant' (αὐθυπόστατος)," but because "the Spirit bestows it on the hypostasis of another (εἰς ἄλλου ὑπόστασιν), in which indeed it may be contemplated. For strictly speaking the 'enhypostaton' is that which is contemplated neither in itself nor in an essence, but in the hypostasis" (3.1.9). In arguing for the eternal, uncreated grace of divinization, Palamas draws extensively on the *Ambigua to John,*[78] but found especially helpful a phrase from the *Questions to Thalassios* about "the divinization without origin" (τὴν ἀγένητον θέωσιν)[79] (3.1.11). Long before the fourteenth century, this phrase prompted a *scholion,* and it was the *scholion* that proved to be of special interest to the Hesychasts, since it speaks of an *enhypostatic* illumination in God: "By the phrase 'divinization without origin,' he was referring to the specific enhypostatic illumination of the divinity, which (illumination) has no origin but appears as incomprehensible in those who are worthy of it."[80]

tially Dionysian, upon whom Palamas leans more heavily, citing a large number of passages from *On the Divine Names* and *On Mystical Theology* (*Triads* 1.3.17-53).

[77] Shortly after the publication of the third *Triad*, the Patriarchal Synod was convoked to examine Barlaam's accusations against the Hesychasts regarding their method of prayer and the vision of the Thaboric Light. In the end, Barlaam was condemned for blasphemy and the patriarch issued a document ordering that his writings be burnt (10 June 1341).

[78] Citing, for example, *Amb* 10.29 (1128AC); *Amb* 10.41 (1137AC); *Amb* 10.47 (1144B); *Amb* 10.48 (1144C); *Amb* 10.76 (1165BC); *Amb* 10.80-81 (1168CD); and *Amb* 54.1 (1376CD).

[79] *QThal* 61 (CCSG 22:101, lines 296-97). The manuscripts reveal no variants here, other than the common confusion of ἀγένητος with ἀγέννητος; Eriugena reads *ingenitam*, and, a few lines later: *Ingenitam, hoc est non genita.* The phrase may also be translated as "ingenerate divinization" or even "uncreated divinization."

[80] «Ἀγένητον εἶπε θέωσιν τὴν κατ' εἶδος ἐνυπόστατον τῆς θεότητος ἔλλαμψιν, ἥτις οὐκ ἔχει γένεσιν ἀλλ' ἀνεννόητον ἐν τοῖς ἀξίοις φανέρωσιν» (CCSG 22:111, no. 14). There is an English translation of this *Ambiguum*, including the *scholion*, in Paul Blowers, *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ. Selected Writings from St. Maximus the Confessor* (Crestwood, 2003), 141, n. 13, who renders the phrase as "deification without origin." It is not impossible

But if Palamas could invoke Maximus as a patristic authority for the uncreated nature of deifying grace and the divine light, Barlaam knew that the Confessor had also described the light of the Transfiguration as a "symbol" (*Amb* 10.29). This clearly seemed to contradict the teaching of the Hesychasts, and was exploited by their opponents, who used it as a proof-text for their own doctrine that all symbols (including the light of Thabor) are created phenomena, apart from which there can be no experience or knowledge of God. In response, Palamas offers an insightful exegesis of Maximus' use of the word "symbol," demonstrating his profound knowledge of the Confessor's thought and expression (2.3.21-22; 3.1.13-20).[81] Palamas' defense of the Maximian notion of the "symbol," which is worthy of consideration in its own right, was taken up and developed by his later disciples, most prominently by Theophanes of Nicaea. Rather than pursue Palamas any further on this question, we will now turn our attention to Theophanes, which will also serve to expand our frame of reference regarding the reception of Maximus among the Hesychasts.

Theophanes (d. ca. 1380/81) was a disciple of Philotheos Kokkinos, and became the bishop of Nicaea during Kokkinos' second patriarchate (i.e., after 1364). The influence of Maximus on Theophanes is evident in virtually all of his works, especially in his five orations *On the Light of Thabor,* in which he defends Kokkinos against the attacks of Prochoros Kydones.[82] These orations include material from no fewer

that Maximus himself was the author of this scholion, which the Hesychasts in any case ascribe directly to his hand.

[81] Palamas acknowledges that Maximus' use of the word "symbol" here is unusual, and that the Church Fathers generally avoided it, "so that people would not be led astray by the ambiguity (*ὁμωνυμία*) of this term and conclude that the divine light is a created reality, alien to divinity." But having made this qualification, Palamas immediately states that "the phrase 'symbol of divinity,' properly understood, cannot be considered absolutely opposed to truth." He contends that all symbols can be effectively reduced to two types: "natural" symbols, which share the nature of their referents (as the "dawn" is a symbol of the "day"), and non-natural symbols, which have only a conventional relation to their referents (as a "flaming arrow" may be said to symbolize an "approaching army," *Triads* 3.1.13). Palamas allows for a third kind of symbol, having no independent natural reality, being a kind of "apparition" or "appearance" (*φάσμα*) (such as the "flying sickle" of Zach 5:1, and the "axes" of Ezek 9:2).

[82] We are fortunate to have two editions of these orations: Ioannes Polemis, *Θεοφάνους Ἐπισκόπου Νικαίας, Περὶ Θαβωρίου Φωτός, Λόγοι Πέντε* (Athens, 1990); and George Zacharopoulos, *Θεοφάνης Νικαίας. Ὁ Βίος καὶ τὸ συγγραφικὸ τοῦ ἔργο* (Thessaloniki, 2003). I have not been able to consult the study of Polemis, *Theophanes* (Vienna, 1996). Zacharopoulos contends

than fifteen of Maximus' works (including the *scholia* on the *corpus Dionysiacum*). Consistent with the citation pattern mentioned above, the orations cite from the *Ambigua to John* around seventy times,[83] whereas the next most-cited work, the *Questions to Thalassios,* is cited only around twenty-five times, followed by the *Two Hundred Chapters on Theology and the Incarnate Dispensation of the Son of God,* which is cited eight times.

In the third oration, Theophanes focuses on Maximus' statement in Ambiguum 10.29 that the "light which shone from the Lord's face (at the Transfiguration) was a symbol of His Divinity."[84] Theophanes argues that here Maximus is not speaking of any ordinary symbol, since the Confessor states that even the "radiance" of its light is "beyond sense perception and intellection."[85] Following Palamas, Theophanes

that Theophanes has been misunderstood by Catholic and Orthodox theologians alike, and argues persuasively against the notion (forwarded by Polemis) that Theophanes was a Thomist.

[83] Especially *Ambiguum* 7 and 10, thus extending the pattern we saw in Palamas, above, n. 70.

[84] «Τὴν μὲν ἀκτινοφανῶς ἐκλάμπουσαν τοῦ προσώπου πανόλβιον αἴγλην, ὡς πᾶσαν ὀφθαλμῶν νικῶσαν ἐνέργειαν, τῆς ὑπὲρ νοῦν καὶ αἴσθησιν καὶ οὐσίαν καὶ γνῶσιν θεότητος αὐτοῦ σύμβολον εἶναι μυστικῶς ἐδιδάσκοντο» (PG 91:1128A). "They (i.e., the disciples) were taught, in a hidden way, that the wholly blessed radiance that shone with dazzling rays of light from the Lord's face, completely overwhelming the power of their eyes, was a symbol of His divinity, which transcends intellect, sensation, being, and knowledge."

[85] The text in PG is corrupt; it should read as follows: «Σκοπήσωμεν δὲ εἰ μὴ καλῶς ἑκάστῳ τῶν εἰρημένων τρόπων κατὰ τὴν θείαν ἐκείνην τοῦ Κυρίου Μεταμόρφωσιν καὶ σοφῶς ἐνυπάρχει τὸ σύμβολον. Ἔδει γὰρ αὐτὸν καθ' ἡμᾶς ἀτρέπτως κτισθῆναι δι' ἄμετρον φιλανθρωπίαν καταδεξάμενον ἑαυτοῦ γενέσθαι τύπον καὶ σύμβολον, καὶ παραδεῖξαι ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ συμβολικῶς ἑαυτόν, καὶ δι' ἑαυτοῦ φαινομένου πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἀφανῶς πάντη κρυπτόμενον χειραγωγῆσαι τὴν ἅπασαν κτίσιν καὶ τῆς ἀφανοῦς καὶ πάντων ἐπέκεινα κρυφιομύστου καὶ ὑπ' οὐδενὸς τῶν ὄντων οὐδενὶ τὸ σύνολον τρόπῳ νοηθῆναι ἢ λεχθῆναι [1168A] δυναμένης ἀπειρίας τὰς ἐκφανεῖς διὰ σαρκὸς θεουργίας ἀνθρώποις παρασχεῖν φιλανθρώπως μηνύματα. Τὸ τοίνυν φῶς τοῦ προσώπου τοῦ Κυρίου τὸ νικῆσαν τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης αἰσθήσεως τὴν ἐνέργειαν, τὸν τρὸπον διετύπου τοῖς μακαρίοις ἀποστόλοις τῆς κατ' ἀπόφασιν μυστικῆς θεολογίας, καθ' ὃν ἡ μακαρία καὶ ἁγία θεότης κατ' οὐσίαν ἐστὶν ὑπεράρρητος καὶ ὑπεράγνωστος καὶ πάσης ἀπειρίας ἀπειράκις ἐξηρημένη, οὐδ' ἴχνος ὅλως καταλήψεως, κἂν ψιλόν, τοῖς μετ' αὐτὴν καταλεῖψασα, οὐδὲ τὴν πῶς κἂν πόσως [1168B] ἡ αὐτὴ καὶ μονὰς ἐστι καὶ τριὰς ἔννοιαν ἐφιεῖσά τινι τῶν ὄντων, ἐπειδὴ μηδὲ χωρεῖσθαι κτίσει τὸ ἄκτιστον πέφυκε, μηδὲ περινοεῖσθαι τοῖς πεπερασμένοις τὸ ἄπειρον.»

"Let us now consider how appropriately and wisely the symbol of each of these two modes of theology is present in the divine Transfiguration of the Lord. For in His measureless love for mankind, there was need for Him to be created in human form (without undergoing any change), and to become a type and symbol of Himself, presenting Himself symbolically by means of His own self, and, through the manifestation of Himself, to lead all creation to Himself (though He is hidden and totally beyond all manifestation), and to provide human beings, in a human-loving fashion, with the visible divine actions of His flesh as signs of His invisible infinity, which is totally transcendent, and secretly hidden, which no being, in absolutely any way whatsoever, can capture

distinguishes between two types of symbols, which he says are different not simply in degree but in kind, "being infinitely separated in their natures."[86] In the case of divine realities, "truth" and "symbol" are sometimes seen in different "substrates" (ἐν διαφόροις ὑποκειμένοις), which differ in the "principle of their being" (ὁ τοῦ εἶναι λόγος), and sometimes in "one and the same reality" (ἐν ἑνὶ καὶ τῷ αὐτῷ πράγματι).[87]

In the first group are symbols that point to divine realities, but are themselves created things, such as the rituals described in the Old Testament, which were but "symbols, types, and shadows of the good things to come" (cf. Heb 10:1). Also in this group are the symbolic forms of Christian worship, such as the church building, the altar table, sacred chant, and the use of incense, all of which are only "symbols adumbrating the divine" (σύμβολα ... τὸ θεῖον αὐτὸ μόνον σκιαγραφεῖ), not simply because they are created, but because they are sensible and "below" the level of intelligible contemplation, and thus "differ in substrate and nature" from the "truth that they image" (διὰ τὸ διάφορα εἶναι τῷ τε ὑποκειμένῳ καὶ τῇ φύσει παρὰ τὴν εἰκονιζομένην ἀλήθειαν).[88]

In the second category are the theophanies (θεοσημεῖαι) described in Scripture, such as the fiery chariot of Elijah and the "divine light" that shone on Paul, since these were not simply temporal, fleeting, or *anhypostatic* phenomena, but rather the manifestation of a "certain divine power" (θεία τις δύναμις) that "appeared differently and variously to the saints in a symbolic manner." Whereas the forms of these manifestations appear to be different, they in fact have the same substrate. The "truth" of these diverse signs is "a single, simple reality beyond sense perception and intellect, in which the divine was not transformed for the sake of human perception, but for which the vision, mental perception (φαντασία), and intellect of those seeing was transformed by the Spirit," insofar as "this was a *pathos* that took place solely in those seeing, and not in the reality that was seen."[89] Theophanes supports his interpretation of *Ambiguum* 10.28-29 by reproducing nearly the whole of *Ambiguum* 19, a text that modern scholarship has not paid much attention to, but which Theophanes reckons as a central witness to the Hesychast doctrine of God and to a corresponding anthropology and epistemology.[90]

in thought or language. Thus the light of the Lord's face, which overcame the activity of human sense perception, formed within the blessed apostles the negative mode of mystical theology, according to which the blessed and holy Godhead, according to its essence, is beyond ineffability and unknowability, for it infinitely transcends all infinity. To the beings which exist after it, the Godhead does not leave behind even the slightest trace of itself that can be apprehended by them, giving up to none of them anything of itself that could be used to form a concept about how, or to what extent, it is at once a Monad and a Trinity, since by its nature the uncreated cannot be contained by any created thing, nor can the unlimited be circumscribed as an object of thought by things that are limited."

[86] Or. 3.2 (ed. Zacharopoulos, 206, lines 74-86).

[87] Or. 3.2 (ed. Zacharopoulos, 206, lines 74-90).

[88] Or. 3.3 (ed. Zacharopoulos, 206-7, lines 91-108). Theophanes adds the further qualifaction that lamps and candles used in church are themselves symbols of the sun, and thus not a direct reference to the light of God Himself.

IV

This study has surveyed three major historical receptions of St Maximus the Confessor and has provided examples of how these receptions have been shaped by the cross-pressures of time, place, confessional biases, competing ideologies, and other personal, cultural, and political factors. There are no grounds to believe that we ourselves are free from the same or similar pressures and influences. Each generation, and every school of thought, has produced an interpretation of Maximus consistent with its own ideological movements. Is Maximus a champion of the *filioque*, a Neoplatonist, an Origenist, a Palamite, a Barlaamite, an Aristotelian, a Thomist, a Hegelian, a Heideggerian, or something else? The answer depends on who is asking the question.[91]

This problem will be further compounded whenever St Maximus is reduced to an object of academic study. Maximus' thought is deeply

[89] «Καὶ ἦν τὰ φαινόμενα τῇ μὲν ἀληθείᾳ ἕν τι ἁπλοῦν καὶ πάσης αἰσθήσεως καὶ γνωστικῆς ἀντιλήψεως καὶ νοῦ παντὸς ἀπειράκις ἀνώτερον ... οὐ μετασχηματιζόμενον τὸ θεῖον καὶ ἀλλοιούμενον πρὸς τὰς ... ἐκείνας ὁράσεις, ἀλλ' ἡ ὄψις καὶ ἡ φαντασία καὶ τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν τῶν ὁρώντων κατασκευαζόμενα τοιαῦτα παρὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος καὶ τυπούμενα ... καὶ ἦν τὸ τοιοῦτον πάθος ἐν τοῖς ὁρῶσι μόνοις, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν τοῖς ὁρωμένοις,» Or. 3.4 (ed. Zacharopoulos, 208-9, lines 117-39).

[90] Note that Theophanes' *Concerning the Eternality of Beings* is also heavily dependent on Maximus. The key text here is *Ambiguum* 10.99: «οὐδέτερον τῶν ἅμα κατὰ τὴν ὕπαρξιν ἀλλήλοις ἐξ ἀϊδίου συνόντων εἶναι τοῦ ἑτέρου ποιητικόν» (PG 91:1188B). In this work, Theophanes speak of an extra-Triadic energy, which he calls a σχετικὴ ἐνέργεια, which is not created, nor does it have anything to do with passive motion; it is the uncreated, creative activity of God that comes into relation with creation, the result of which is a passive motion characteristic of creatures; ed. Ioannis Polemis, *Θεοφάνους Νικαίας, Ἀπόδειξις ὅτι ἐδύναντο ἐξ ἀιδίου γεγενῆσθαι τὰ ὄντα*, Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi. Philosophii Byzantini 10 (Athens, 2000), 63-64.

[91] Modern discourses have stressed the problematic nature of all cultural appropriations; cf. Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York, 2006); Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (New York, 2006); and James Cuno, *Who Owns Antiquity? Museums and the Battle Over Our Ancient Heritage* (Princeton, 2008).

rooted in a particular way of life, in a concrete set of practices. If we study the Confessor solely from a theoretical point of view, we may very well succeed in generating true statements, but we ourselves shall remain far from the truth that those statements describe. Removing Maximus from an ecclesial and monastic context to an academic one typically means that his thought—not unlike Jerome's prisoner of war—will be made to conform to certain systematic ideals or framed by concerns and problems that do not emerge naturally within the works themselves. A merely intellectual retrieval may suffice for the academy, but it will have little impact on life, and it will not have honored the life of the Confessor.[92] It follows that authentic retrievals of St Maximus' thought will be rooted in a life of ecclesial practice and experience and will lead back to and nurture that life.

And herein lies the relevance of St Maximus' thought for today: it points to a way of life and to a way of doing theology that both reveals our fragmentation and challenges us to move beyond it. This is the Confessor's greatest gift to our broken world: a theology that is essentially holistic. For St Maximus the Confessor, metaphysics, cosmology, liturgy, science, spirituality, medicine, mathematics, ethics, and logic are not understood as independent objects or areas of study, but interconnected and constitutive elements of a larger whole. Needless to say, the fundamentally holistic nature of Maximus' theology makes lucid exposition a difficult task. Any one element within Maximus' universe is related to all the others and cannot be grasped or understood in isolation. To transpose what is essentially a unified field of meaning into a linear or discursive sequence is inherently misleading, for "the one Logos is the many *logoi*, and the many *logoi* are the one Logos" (*Ambiguum* 7,15). The universe of Maximus the Confessor is composed, not of fragments, but of parts, and parts are parts of wholes, whereas fragments are disconnected and isolated both from the whole and from all the other fragments.

The fragment is not knowledge. The fragment may contain elements of truth, but when it is given the interpretive value of the whole, when it is allowed to displace all the other elements, it has become simply another ideology. Fragmentation is not just false separation, taking apart what belongs together, but also false unity, forcing things together that are truly different. Fragmentary knowledge is an impediment to understanding, and our experiments in retrievals and appropriations, when constructed solely on the basis of fragments, will not bring about wholeness but only further divisions and dislocations.

[92] Cf. St John Chrysostom, *Homily on the Martyrs*: «Τιμὴ γὰρ μάρτυρος, μίμησις μάρτυρος» (PG 50:663A).

The fragmentation of our world today, which stems from the fragmentation of the human mind, has its root in a deeper pathology that Maximus ascribes to the passions. For the impassioned soul, the world is divided into numberless, unrelated aspects having no integral tie between them, and so it wanders amidst isolated impressions, irrational sensations, and unrelated acts of knowing. In describing the state of the soul under the tyranny of the passions, Maximus underlines the limitations inherent in the mere description of such states and shows us the way that leads beyond them:

> The experts in these matters divide each of these states of the soul into many other aspects, and if anyone wanted to write them down in detail, he would need to amass a great many words, and expend a good deal of time, such that the final product would be more than its readers could endure. But what would be truly great and wondrous, requiring much attention and effort—and above all the help of God—would [1197D] be for someone to acquire mastery over anger and desire, and all their various manifestations; and blessed is the man who has acquired the ability to move them in whatever direction is in accordance with reason, until he is purged of his former defilements by means of an ascetic and ethical way of life.[93]

[93] «Διαιροῦσι δὲ καὶ τούτων ἕκαστον εἰς ἄλλα πολλά, ἅπερ εἰ βουληθείη τις δι' ἀκριβοῦς ἐξετάσεως παραδοῦναι γραφῇ, πολὺν ἀθροίσει λόγον καὶ χρόνον δαπανήσει, ὡς μηδὲ ἀνεκτὸν εἶναι τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσι διὰ τὸ πλῆθος. Μέγα οὖν καὶ θαυμαστὸν ὄντως ἐστὶ καὶ πολλῆς δεόμενον [1197D] προσοχῆς τε καὶ σπουδῆς, καὶ πρὸ τούτων τῆς θείας ἐπικουρίας, τὸ δυνηθῆναι πρῶτον μὲν τῆς ὑλικῆς δυάδος τῶν ἐμφύτων κρατῆσαι δυνάμεων, θυμοῦ λέγω καὶ ἐπιθυμίας, καὶ τοῦ κατ' αὐτὰς μερισμοῦ, καὶ μακάριος ὅστις ἄγειν ἑτοίμως ταύτας ὅποι τῷ λόγῳ δοκεῖ δεδύνηται, μέχρις ἂν τοῖς πρακτικοῖς διὰ τῆς ἠθικῆς φιλοσοφίας τῶν προτέρων καθαίρηται μολυσμῶν.» (*Amb.* 10, 111, PG 91, 1197CD) The translation paraphrases the text.

Maximus Confessor, Leontius of Byzantium, and the Late Aristotelian Metaphysics of the Person

Brian E. Daley

The central focus of Maximus the Confessor's sweeping vision of the world and its future is generally acknowledged to be what we moderns call his "Christology": his understanding of the person of the Incarnate Son of God as the living, personally realized synthesis (to use Hans Urs von Balthasar's favorite term) of the infinitely different, yet irreducibly interconnected realities of God and his creation. Balthasar, in his epoch-making book on Maximus of 1968, *Cosmic Liturgy*, rightly identifies "the most central mystery of Maximus' conception of the world" as "a mystery that holds within itself the solution of all the world's riddles: the unification of God and world, the eternal and the temporal, the infinite and the finite, in the hypostasis of a single being—the God who became man."[1] Some pages later, Balthasar cites a famous passage from *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 60, as summing up Maximus' grand vision of the story of creation and salvation:

> For Christ's sake, or for the sake of the Mystery of Christ, all the ages and all the beings they contain took their beginning and their end in Christ. For that synthesis was already conceived before all ages: the synthesis of limit and the unlimited, of measure and the unmeasurable, of circumscription and the uncircumscribed, of the Creator with the creature, of rest with movement—that syn-

[1] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy. The Universe according to Maximus the Confessor* (trans. Brian E. Daley, SJ; San Francisco: Ignatius, 2003) 235-236.

thesis which, in these last days, has become visible in Christ, bringing the plan of God to its fulfillment through itself.[2]

This text comes from the collection of brief explanations of difficult but important Scriptural passages that Maximus apparently sent to his older friend, the Libyan priest-monk Thalassius, from his monastic exile in Carthage, sometime between 630 and 633;[3] in many respects, it sums up the central emphasis of Maximus' treatment of the person and achievement of Christ in his earlier works.

Some ten years later, Maximus began to argue, in a number of places, that an orthodox faith in Christ, founded in the decrees of the Ecumenical Councils and the theological works that frame them, needs to acknowledge that the Savior, as God and a complete human being, possesses and uses two natural wills: perfectly harmonized by the fact of the Incarnation, yet each functioning in its own way as belonging to a greater natural reality. So in his essay addressed to the Cypriot deacon Marinus, *Opusculum* 7, in his longer, undedicated *Opusculum* 16, and in the celebrated *Dialogue with Pyrrhus*—which is the transcript of a public disputation in Carthage between Maximus the monk and Pyrrhus, the deposed Patriarch of Constantinople, in July of 645—the Confessor develops at length his reflections on the metaphysics of Christ's person. His arguments here would strongly influence the Churches of West and East—at the Lateran Synod of 649 and at the Third Council of Constantinople of 680/681—to recognize formally that a serious commitment to the now-classical Christology of Chalcedon requires the admission that the two natures or substances of the one incarnate Son of God continue to be fully operative, in synthetic conjunction with each other, in the *natural acts* of will that belong to the characteristic functioning of all spiritual beings.

An earlier, strongly cosmic and soteriological perspective on Christ's work in creation, then, characterizes Maximus' theology, as well as a

[2] *Ibid.* 272, citing *QThal.* 60 (CCG 22.75) [translation here from Balthasar's citation].

[3] For the date, see Polycarp Sherwood, OSB, *An Annotated Date-List of the Works of St. Maximus the Confessor* (Studia Anselmiana 30; Rome: Herder 1952) 34-35, which I follow here in all questions of the chronology of Maximus' works. Sherwood bases this dating on the fact that Maximus refers, in *QThal.* 39, to *Amb.* 65, written no later than 630; there is no reference here, however, to the one or two "operations" (ἐνέργειαι) of Christ, a subject that came into dispute after the publication of the "Pact of Union" between the Severan party in Egypt and the Melkite Patriarch Cyrus of Phasis in June of 633.

somewhat later, more strictly ontological approach to the reality of Christ, based on a careful analysis of the psychology of human existence that is rooted in the categories of late antique philosophy—revealing to us a speculative Maximus, perhaps, and a later "scholastic" Maximus; a Maximus who sees Christ in the broadest historical terms, and one who scrutinizes Christ's person and being minutely from within. But what connects these two approaches? What I would like to point out here is that what led to the transformation of Maximus' own thinking was most likely his rediscovery, during the theological debates in the 630s, of the importance of texts, arguments, and controversies from a century before: arguments engaging the defenders and the critics of Chalcedon's Christology, which had led to the careful reformulation, at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553, of how that Christology was officially formulated.

The context for this rediscovery of sixth-century "academic" theology (if we may call it that), in the mid-630s, was the criticism that apparently greeted the conclusion of the "Pact of Union" between the Melkite Patriarch Cyrus of Alexandria and the Egyptian anti-Chalcedonians in June of 633—a decree by Cyrus affirming that the two original "natures" personally united in Christ were held together by a single "theandric operation" or activity. This phrase, borrowed from the end of the so-called "Fourth Letter," addressed to a certain Gaius, of the Pseudo-Dionysius and inconclusively discussed by defenders and critics of Chalcedon as early as the 620s, seems at first to have been accepted with cautious enthusiasm by Sergius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, who, with the Emperor Heraclius himself, was always on the lookout for language that might lead to rapprochement among dissident Christian bodies within the Empire. In a letter to Honorius, the Pope of Rome, probably written late in 633 or early in 634, Sergius himself endorsed the notion of a "single theandric activity" in Christ and rejected any language of two wills operative in his actions; Honorius responded favorably, citing texts of St Paul and the now-familiar doctrine of the "communion of idioms" in Christ, which seemed to him to point towards a single, ontologically integrated set of activities carried out by the Savior.[4] But there

[4] For the chronology of this correspondence, see (Polycarp Sherwood, "Constantinople III," in F.X. Murphy and Polycarp Sherwood, *Constantinople II et Constantinople III* (Histoire des Conciles Oecuméniques 3; Paris: L'Orante, 1973) 149-153 and 158-162; Demetrios Bathtrel-

was obvious concern among some in the Eastern Church. Shortly after the "Pact of Union" between Chalcedonians and Non-Chalcedonians was announced in Alexandria, the aged and venerable monk Sophronius—himself a Syrian who had spent many years in the Egyptian desert, had travelled to Rome and then to Carthage, serving in the latter place as a spiritual mentor to Maximus, and had returned to Alexandria in the spring of 633—was appalled by the notion of a single activity or operation in Christ, seeing here a new form of Apollinarianism; he set out again immediately for Constantinople to confront Sergius there and prevent him from giving the Pact official ecumenical support.[5] His protests were successful; Sergius, clearly anticipating only new dissent in the wake of Cyrus' Pact, met with his own synod in the early fall of 633 and issued a decree or *Psephos*, in which he ordered that Church leaders in his region simply avoid language of "one activity" or "two activities" in Christ completely.

> Rather [the *Psephos* continues] one shall confess, according to the teaching of the holy Ecumenical Councils, that one and the same, the only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is truthful, Himself brings to reality (energei) what is divine and what is human, and that all activity (energeia) that is of God and all activity that is human proceeds from one sole incarnate Word, "without division or confusion,"[6] and that it is related to a single, unique Person. For the expression "one activity," although it was used by certain Fathers, sounds strange and troubles the ears of some people, who imagine that one emphasizes this in order to avoid speaking of the two natures that are hypostatically united in Christ our Lord. In the same way, the expression "two activities" scandalizes a great number of people because it was never used by any of the saints and great preachers of the Church's

los, *The Byzantine Christ. Person, Nature and will in the Christology of St. Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 62-66. The "monenergist" position had apparently been promoted in the 620s by Bishop Theodore of Pharan, in the Sinai Peninsula, who had argued in correspondence with the young Sergius—as a way of making the Chalcedonian definition more widely acceptable in strictly Cyrillian terms—that the two intact natures of the incarnate Son exhibited only one divine ἐνέργεια or mode of operation, because the Incarnation was wholly the work of God and His humanity was simply God's instrument. The Logos, in other words, as the acting subject of the Word-made-flesh, was the source of all His actions and made all his choices. See especially the detailed treatment of Werner Elert, *Der Ausgang der altkirchlichen Christologie* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1957) esp. 185-229.

[5] Mansi 11.488. For the chronology of these events, see Sherwood, *Constantinople III* 152-153.

[6] This is an allusion to the dogmatic definition of Chalcedon.

> Mysteries, and because it would imply that one should confess two wills [in Christ], opposed to each other...[7]

The Patriarch's sympathies here seem clearly to lie with the confession of a single activity in Christ, but he chooses to promulgate the diplomatic solution of banning discussion altogether!

Late that same year (633), Sophronius—who had apparently returned from the imperial capital to Alexandria and who was by now an octogenarian—was unexpectedly elected Patriarch of Jerusalem. Early in 634, he sent out, as was customary, a synodical letter addressed to the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Rome, professing his faith in detail and requesting recognition and communion.[8] This *Synodikon* covers the whole range of the faith, as it was then professed in the Church of Jerusalem, but lays special emphasis on the continuing intactness and the irreducible distinction of both the divinity and the humanity of Christ. Sophronius insists, in accord with the Chalcedonian formula, that Christ is "at once both two and one," without any contradiction: "He is one with respect to His hypostasis and person, and two with respect to His natures and their natural properties." And these two natures, remaining real, continue to be operative in their own characteristic ways, "conforming to the quality inherent in each nature or to their essential properties—something that would not be possible, in spite of the fact that He has only one hypostasis and person, if He only had one single nature."[9] God alone, or a human being alone, could not truly act in the ways the Gospels represent Jesus as acting;

> [B]ut Emmanuel, who is one, and who, in this unity, is both God and human, really performed the works of his two natures, carrying out his actions in distinct ways (κατ' ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο).[10]

Sophronius goes on to insist that this insistence on two active natures or realities in Christ does not imply the Nestorian conception of him as two united Sons—which was apparently the great fear of those

[7] Cited in Sherwood, *Constantinople III* 306-307.

[8] This is published in PG 87.3148-3200. The central section on the two energies or operations in Christ is translated into French in Christoph von Schönborn, *Sophrone de Jérusalem. Vie monastique et confession dogmatique* (Théologie Historique 20; Paris: Beauchesne, 1972) 201-222.

[9] 87.3168 AB.

[10] *Ibid.* 3168B.

who continued to resist Chalcedonian language; rather, "we say that one and the same Christ carried out both his 'higher' works and his 'lower' works according to the essential properties of each of his natures."[11] And because these natural functions are the operations of the two distinct natures belonging to a single subject or hypostasis, "each nature performs in cooperation (συνεργία), at once undivided and unconfused, with the other essence."[12]

Sophronius also comments here, as apparently he had done orally to Patriarch Sergius, on the reference in the "Pact of Union" to the phrase we have already mentioned from the Pseudo-Dionysius' so-called "Fourth Letter," addressed to a certain Gaius, on the person of Christ. This short work, dating presumably from about 500, had emphasized from the start that the Incarnation means that the Son of God is "down here" with us, and "truly is human in his whole substance."[13] It concludes by observing densely that the incarnate Son

> was not a human being, nor was he as someone non-human; but becoming truly human from among humans, yet in a way that is above humans, and—besides this—not carrying out divine actions as God does nor human actions as a human does, but rather as God who has become a man, he presents to us a new kind of "theandric" activity.[14]

The *Pact*, in alluding to this Dionysian terminology, speaks of "a *single* theandric activity," perhaps understanding κοινὴν for the apparently original καινὴν, thus strengthening its own case. Sophronius, in the *Synodicon*, implicitly criticizes this misreading, and suggests that while some of Christ's actions were clearly human and some clearly divine, there are some—his miracles, presumably—that can be thought of as both.

> These latter actions (Sophronius continues) belong to what one might call 'the new, theandric activity,' which is not single, but which exists in different genera. Dionysius—the one Paul converted on the Areopagus—used this expression, because it contains at once

[11] *Ibid.* 3169B.

[12] *Ibid.* 1369D.

[13] Ps.-Dionysius, *Epist.* 4 (ed. G. Heil and A.M. Ritter, *Corpus Dionysiacum* 2 [Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991] 160).

[14] *Ibid.* 161. The last, most disputed, word here, ἐνέργεια, can also be translated in the more strictly Aristotelian sense of "actuality." Dionysius, however, seems to be thinking in this context more of the dynamic ways in which Jesus works as God in human actions, and performs human actions with divine power and meaning,

> what belongs to the divinity and what belongs to the humanity, and it perfectly reveals, in a concise and elegant phrase, the proper activity of each of the natures and essences.[15]

Sophronius takes "theandric activity," in other words, not as an ontological designation of a new kind of hybrid natural action, bringing to expression a new, hybrid kind of reality, but as a linguistic move designed to show the mutual inflection—the "synergy"—of Christ's human and divine performance in the world. In this way, his interpretation seems to anticipate what Maximus would later do by his use of adverbs, observing in several of his middle and later works that the point of Dionysius' phrase is really that Christ "does human things in a divine way, and divine things in a human way."[16]

These events set the background for Maximus' apparent turn, in the mid-630s, towards a deeper, more technical interest in the terminology of the sixth-century debates on the person of Christ, which had led up to the canons of the Second Council of Constantinople. Maximus seems to have been well-connected in Alexandria; his friend and spiritual son, Peter "the Illustrious," for many years the main Byzantine general in Northern Africa, had apparently been transferred to Egypt in the spring of 633, in the face of growing Islamic expansion in Syria.[17] Alexandria had fallen to the armies of the invading Persian Empire in 619; the official Patriarch, John "the Almsgiver," had fled to his native Cyprus in 616, and the whole Eastern Mediterranean seems to have been in political and religious disarray for several years, until the Persians were forced to lift their siege of Constantinople in 626, and gradually to withdraw eastwards. Now, as the imperial government recovered strength in Egypt, the Emperor was once again intent to unify the people religiously by finding some form of compromise between Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians that leaders and people could live with. A new Melkite Patriarch, the Armenian Cyrus of Phasis, was ap-

[15] *Synodicon* 3177 BC.

[16] See, for example, Ep. 19 (PG 91.593 A2-4); Ep. 15 (*ibid.* 573 B), specifically alluding to this passage in Dionysius' Ep. 4; *Opusculum* 7 (*ibid.* 84 C).

[17] In Maximus' first trial, in 655, he was accused of urging Peter not to comply with the Emperor's order to resistthe Muslim invaders at the head of the imperial armies: see the *Relatio Motionis* in Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neal (eds.), CCG 39 (1999) 12-15. It is not clear whether or not this charge is true, or if it is, at what date Peter proved insubordinate—or simply prescient—in this way. He was apparently in Egypt in from the spring of 633 at least through 634.

pointed by Heraclius in 631, with instructions to find a way to reconciliation. The first concrete result was the "Pact of Union" we have mentioned, of June, 633.

A number of Maximus' letters, particularly, illustrate the monk's own theological development during these crucial years, in the face of these events. Probably in late 632 or early 633, he wrote to Julian and Christopher, a pair of Alexandrian lawyers (σχολαστικοί)—perhaps then living as exiles in Carthage—congratulating them on their refusal to yield to pressure to abandon the orthodox confession of faith for the Severan position of a single-natured Christ.[18] Trouble was apparently brewing, and Maximus—who may still have had the venerable Sophronius in Carthage to guide him—began to emerge now more explicitly as a defender of Chalcedonian Christology.

Towards the end of 633, probably, or the beginning of 634, Maximus wrote a longer letter to Pyrrhus, priest and abbot—Epistle 19 in the collection of his letters—responding to an inquiry from Pyrrhus on Maximus' understanding of the operations or activities of Christ, apparently in the wake of Patriarch Sergius' *Psephos*; Maximus, who seems not yet to know Pyrrhus well, begins with elaborate praise for the abbot's own life and work,[19] then offers his own qualified approval of the *Psephos*, insofar as it is an attempt to prevent further propaganda for the actual phrase affirming "one operation" in Christ. He does, however, diplomatically disagree with the assertion in the *Psephos* that suggests a monenergist Christology in other words, insisting that Jesus' humanity never followed its own natural inclinations "separately or on its own initiative," but that it always functioned "at the time, in the way, and to the degree that God the Word willed"[20]—an attempt to resist the notion of an independent human nature in Christ that clearly, in Maximus' view, had gone too far.

Around the same time, Maximus wrote Epistle 13, to his friend the general Peter, then in Alexandria;[21] Peter has asked for Maximus' guidance

[18] *Ep.* 17 (PG91.580-584).

[19] Later on, in *Opusculum* 9, sent in 646-648 to the clergy and people of Sicily, Maximus felt forced to apologize for this early paean of praise for Pyrrhus, with whom he had since had his public disputation. See PG 91.129C-132C.

[20] Mansi 10. 996 B; trans. Schönborn 307-308.

[21] PG 91.529 B - 532 D.

on Christological issues, apparently in the face of continuing controversies in Egypt. Here Maximus explains that he does not have access to the kind of library that would allow him to study and explain orthodox doctrine at length but from his existing knowledge offers a brief, telling criticism of the Severans, who continued to reject all forms of two-nature Christology. To confess Christ is both God and a human being after the Incarnation is inevitably to affirm He has two natures; this can be acceptably expressed by saying He exists "in two natures," or by using the Cyrillian phrase (approved at Constantinople II), "one nature of the Word, made flesh." It is perfectly correct, Maximus continues, to speak of Christ as "one composite hypostasis (μία ὑπόστασις σύνθετος)," but not as "one composite nature," which suggests a hybrid formed from two utterly diverse forms of being. If Peter feels he needs to go into Christological issues more deeply, Maximus suggests, he should consult his own mentor Sophronius, who was apparently still in Alexandria.

Letters 14 and 15, dating probably between 634 and 636[22] and clearly forming a pair, lead us most deeply into Maximus' new Christological research. In Letter 14, addressed again to General Peter, Maximus introduces the bearer, an Alexandrian deacon named Cosmas, whom he characterizes as "a good and wise man."[23] Cosmas has been living in exile, most recently in Carthage, where he has met Maximus; he has, the monk says, recently returned to a whole-hearted profession of Chalcedonian faith, apparently after flirting with the position of the Severans, and is now returning to his native city, where he hopes to regain his old position in the clergy. Maximus writes that he has helped to lead the exiled deacon back to the Church's position on the Person of Christ, by providing him with a "written memorandum,"[24] and now asks Peter to use his influence, if necessary, "with the reverend Pope" to facilitate his restoration. He then subjoins a condensed but detailed profession of faith along Chalcedonian lines, which Cosmas has made his own.[25] He has confessed Christ as being truly God and truly human; Christ has not changed in what he always was, nor altered what he has

[22] So Sherwood, *Annotated Date-List* 40-41.

[23] PG 91.536A.

[24] PG 91.537 C5-6.

[25] *Ibid.* 536A – 537B.

become, "but is as, a complete hypostasis, naturally both."[26] Hypostatic union in him rules out division, but not the distinction of his natures.[27] Anyone who investigates carefully what number means will see that it designates quantity and distinct identity, but not necessarily division; applied to the natures of the one Christ, the number "two" simply means that divinity and humanity in him remain what they are, infinitely different from each other.[28] One can also accurately speak of Christ as "one nature of the Word, made flesh," avoiding any suggestion of either Apollinarian or Nestorian thought, if one simply sees this as an affirmation of his double origin, within the Mystery of God as Son of the Father, and in the world as the Son of Mary.[29] For this reason, too, Mary is legitimately referred to by Christians as Theotokos, and we rightly confess that the Son of God has undergone human experiences and trials, including even death.[30] The reason for these astonishing assertions is simply that he who is by nature infinite is also by nature loving (φιλάνθρωπος), and therefore has freely taken on all the normal limitations of a human life.[31] Christ, so understood, will come again as judge at history's end. Maximus adds that he himself has received Cosmas' profession and testifies to his attitude of "simple faith in Christ."[32]

The most likely explanation of Maximus' Epistle 15—which is addressed to Cosmas himself—is that it is that very "memorandum" that Maximus mentions in the letter we have just outlined: a summary for an educated reader of the faith of the Chalcedonian Church.[33] It is a densely argued treatise on the ontology of the Person of Christ, unlike Maximus' previous works in both its precision and its technical focus on the ontology of personal being.[34] Clearly Epistle 15 is closely based on several treatises by the Chalcedonian polemicist active in the 530s and 540s, Leontius

[26] *Ibid.* 536 B1-2.
[27] *Ibid.* 536 B5-9.
[28] *Ibid.* 536 B9 - D3.
[29] *Ibid.* 536 D 4 – 537 A8.
[30] *Ibid.* 537 A8 – B4.
[31] *Ibid.* 537 B4 – 12.
[32] *Ibid.* 537 C3.
[33] So, for instance, Sherwood, *Annotated Date-List* 40.
[34] The text is found in PG 91.548 C 12 – 576 B 11. A translation of Ep. 15, with introduction and commentary, entitled *The Logic of the Word Incarnate* was submitted as a licentiate dissertation in the Weston School of Theology (now Boston College's School of Theology and Ministry) in 1988, by Kevin M. Flannery, SJ. I draw extensively on Fr. Flannery's work here.

of Byzantium—so closely, in fact, that it is tempting to believe that when Maximus did have access to a reliable theological library in the months after he wrote his summary of orthodox Christology in Epistle 13, the main resource he found that he could rely on was a set of Leontius' collected essays.[35] Much of the letter seems simply to paraphrase arguments put forward by Leontius, although—in typical late antique style—he is never mentioned by name, and only classical passages from the Cappadocian Fathers are actually cited. It is in this letter, really, that Maximus himself clearly moves from the speculative "long view" of the role of Christ in history he had taken in his early works to a tightly focused consideration of the structure of Christ's person, as a single concrete hypostasis, or individual subject, composed—without confusion or internal division—of two utterly different natural realities, that of God and that of a full human being. He had entered the world of sixth-century Greek scholasticism

After an introductory paragraph addressed to the deacon Cosmas, identifying the work as a reflection on the way in which Christ unites in his Person universal and particular and on the particular character of this union, Epistle 15 begins with a brief florilegium of Patristic sources grounding the classical use of the terms "nature" or "substance" and "hypostasis" or "persona": six well-known texts from Basil of Caesaraea and four from Gregory of Nazianzus. The florilegium or anthology of authorities had become a standard feature of polemical treatises on Christology in the fifth century and afterwards, as a way of showing that a text's arguments were grounded in the language and ideas of the classical voices of the orthodox tradition. The ten texts Maximus brings forward here, at the start of his essay, all had been used in sixth-century treatises, five of them by Leontius.

In Maximus' own exposition, which follows this brief set of authorities, the monk deals with essentially the same set of issues Leontius had confronted a century earlier, in the context of the struggles over the Chalcedonian formula. First of all, he establishes the differences between οὐσία (or substance) and φύσις (or nature) on the one hand, as

[35] We know, in fact, that at least five of Leontius' six treatises on Christology circulated as a unified body of works: see the introduction to the collected edition in PG 86.1268B – 1272 C. The tracts called the *Epilyseis* or *Solutions to the Arguments of Severus* and the *Epaporemata* or *Thirty Chapters*, both dealing with arguments put forward against Chalcedon by the supporters of Severus of Antioch, are not counted individually among the "three books" of the collected edition, but seem to be considered an appendix to the first part, which is mainly an engagement with Severus' Christology.

designating universal, intelligible realities; and ὑπόστασις (or concrete individual) and πρόσωπον (or persona)—the external role played by an individual in a social context—as embodying substances in particular terms, on the other.[36] Like Leontius, Maximus also makes a careful distinction between a hypostasis, or individual, and what is called τὸ ἐνυπόστατον: a generic or universal reality that is encountered in our experience precisely by being "hypostatized"—realized in a concrete, limited individual.[37] Maximus then goes on to insist that Christ possesses not a single composite nature but a single composite hypostasis: an individual concrete existence that brings together realities of different generic identities.[38] Maximus dwells at greatest length, however, not so much on these largely lexical and conceptual questions, but on the implications of numbering the aspects of Christ's Person.[39] It seems clear that the real fear of the critics of Chalcedon, in the mid-seventh century as much as in the early sixth, was the assumption that affirming humanity and divinity in Christ as two natures or substances was an admission that these realities were irreconcilably divided—two things, not one—and that therefore God had not become man. To minds influenced by the long Neoplatonic tradition that identified the radical heart of being with oneness,[40] any numbering implied separateness; and so in the Chalcedonian definition the number "two" was for many believers, on the linguistic and conceptual level, the telltale sign of a Christology of division.[41] In a way very close to striking passages in Leontius' *Epilyseis* and *Thirty Chapters*, Maximus by contrast insists that number, in itself, neither divides nor unites anything: it is not a category, in Aristotelian terms; it is neither substance nor accident; it is simply a pointer, a way

[36] *Ep.* 15 (549 B – 552D). The fundamental argument running through several of Leontius' works is that if one understands these concepts correctly, one would be able to see the persuasive force of the Chalcedonian distinction: see CNE beginning; *Epap.* 1-6, 25; *Epil.* 1 - 2.

[37] *Ibid.* (557D – 560 A); in comparison, see especially the famous passage in Leontius' CNE 1.

[38] *Ibid.* (560AB); cf. Leontius, CNE 6; *Epil.* 4; *Epap.* 14, 15, 19.

[39] *Ibid.* (561 B - 565C).

[40] See, for instance, Plotinus, *Enn.* 6.1.4; Simplicius, *Commentary on the Categories* 6 (CAG 7, 129.10-27).

[41] See Maximus' rhetorical question towards the end of *Ep.* 15 (573 D): "Why are we reviled by the shameless, and by those who would dare to speak any lie, as if we were advocates of division? It is because we mention only the mere word 'number,' in order to indicate the difference of the natures that is preserved after the union...".

of indicating a quantity that already exists in reality.[42] Maximus argues, in fact, that ascribing number to the unconfused natural realities actively exhibited by Christ—affirming that his humanity and divinity are two distinct "things" (πράγματα)—is the only possible path "towards the preservation of the Mystery" (εἰς τὴν τοῦ Μυστηρίου σύστασιν).[43]

Maximus sums up the argument of this manifesto by insisting that:

a) "there is in Christ both identity and difference": identity of hypostasis or subject, but difference between the Logos and his flesh as the two unlike "things out of which he is;"[44]

b) so it is reverent for Christians to affirm in Christ, after the union, both identity and difference; Christ as a Person is "One of the Holy Trinity,"[45] but his "parts" remain different from each other, and thus can be counted.

Maximus goes on to reject the Christology of Severus of Antioch as crypto-Apollinarian, implying that his flesh is "of one substance" with the divinity of the Logos, and thus with the Father and the Holy Spirit.[46] And he adds to this summary his own confession of faith that "the difference, as it exists in Christ, is natural (for the divinity and the humanity are not the same substantially), but the identity is hypostatic...".[47] "For not only is Christ of the parts [of which he is composed], but he is also in them—or to speak more properly—these parts are Christ."[48]

Through most of Epistle 15, Maximus has carefully avoided mentioning the natural operations or "energies" of Christ's two natures—observing the letter, at least, of Patriarch Sergius' *Psephos* of 633. Towards the end of his confessional statement, however, Maximus offers a brief, carefully nuanced picture of Christ's two activities that seems to open the path towards his later, more robust defense of his two natural faculties of will. He writes:

[42] *Ep.* 15 (564 A-D); see Leontius, *Epil.* 2; *Epap.* 8, 10.

[43] *Ibid.* 15 (565 A).

[44] *Ibid.* (565 D)

[45] This assertion, which Maximus repeats at 573 C, is not found in so many words in Leontius' works but is asserted in Canon 10 of the Second Council of Constantinople. It is one of the characteristic affirmations of that Council's recasting of the one-hypostasis, two-nature Christology of Chalcedon, which twentieth-century scholarship has labeled "Neo-Chalcedonian."

[46] *Ep.* 15 (565 A)

[47] *Ibid.* 572 C.

[48] *Ibid.* 573 A.

> And we speak of the miracles and the sufferings as belonging to the same subject, since there clearly is but one Christ working both divine and human acts (ἐνεργοῦντος): the divine in a fleshly way, because He produced the power (δύναμιν) to do miracles through flesh that was not without its share of natural activity (ἐνεργείας);[49] but the human in a divine way, because without any violence to his nature He willingly underwent the trials of human suffering, as much as He was able.[50]

Although he makes no mention here of sixth-century discussions of the activities of Christ as manifesting and flowing from his two distinct natures, it is quite possible that Maximus' cautious statement here—his first clear suggestion that a genuinely two-nature Christology must imply two operations or spheres of activity as well—may also be inspired by a work of Leontius of Byzantium from the previous century: his essay "Against the Aphthartodocetists," a critique of those who insisted that the humanity of Christ, as belonging to the Word, although genuine, must always be free of human vulnerability and corruptibility. Subsistent things, Leontius replies in good Aristotelian fashion, all have a pattern of acting and responding that is built into their natures and that reveals their identity. If Jesus did not normally act in a way conformed to his human nature, there would be nothing miraculous or striking about his occasionally acting in ways that surpass normal human powers, which we call miracles.[51] So Leontius writes:

> Just as the Lord of all, when He shared what was his with the flesh, remained undiminished in himself and steadfastly retained the position that is his by nature, so too his humanity, remaining in its own natural bounds and holding on to its natural powers and activities (δυνάμεις τε καὶ ἐνέργειας), and not departing from our common, innocent passions—and thus in its very being laying down the definition of human perfection—shared all the riches which came from the Word; or rather—having the very fount of riches in the Word—it [his humanity] poured forth from itself all that the Word possesses, for the sake of the Word.[52]

[49] Here Maximus seems to be thinking in classic Aristotelian terms, suggesting that every substance naturally possesses the ability or "potency" to carry out a specific set of activities; it is in these activities that the substance's identity is realized for what it naturally is.

[50] *Ep.* 15 (573 B).

[51] Leontius of Byzantium, *Contra Aphthartodocetas* (PG 86.1333 D).

[52] *Ibid.* (1336 D – 1337 A).

For the humanity of Christ to be genuine, in other words, as Christians profess, it must remain operative and distinct, even after the Incarnation.

Early in 642, Maximus again wrote to the deacon Cosmas in Alexandria (*Ep.* 16[53]) praising him for holding fast to his Chalcedonian faith in the face of increasing imperial and ecclesiastical pressure to compromise and informing him of similar pressure being then applied by the Empress Martina to George, the imperial eparch or governor in Carthage, to release from prison some anti-Chalcedonian nuns who had objected, as Severus had done over a century earlier, to the Empire's official two-nature confession as failing to do justice to the legacy of Cyril. Tensions over the Person of Christ clearly had not abated. Shortly before this, in the last months of 641, Maximus had also written an anxious letter (*Ep.* 12[54]) to his old friend, John the Chamberlain, a powerful court official, complaining of the same apparent tendency in imperial religious policy, in spite of its official acceptance of the Chalcedonian formula, to favor the anti-Chalcedonian proponents of "a single composite nature" in Christ. Here, after describing what he saw as a dangerous situation for the orthodox faith at Carthage, and after explaining again at length the actual significance of number in speaking of the divine and the human in Christ, Maximus again adds a brief profession of his own faith as a Chalcedonian Christian:

> We confess, then, our Lord Jesus Christ to be from two natures, since He is composed of divinity and humanity, but recognize him to be in two natures, in that He exists in divinity and humanity; for just as when we say "from two natures" we praise him for being from divinity and from humanity, so by saying "in two natures," we rightly signify that he exists in divinity and humanity. He is not separated, after the union, from either of the natures of which He has come to subsist, but He always is, and is recognized to be, in them both, from which He always exists. And we confess, in addition, that He is two natures, united in hypostasis without any division, the same one truly God and a human being...[55]

[53] PG 91.576-580.

[54] PG 91.460-509.

[55] *Ep.* 12 (500 B-C).

The language is formal, almost liturgical—close to that of Chalcedon, nuanced in terms of Constantinople II; the focus is on the familiar technicalities of terms and phrases, the niceties of prepositions, the meaning of number. It is the language of academic theological controversy, or of the Alexandrian philosophical lecture-hall, perhaps, rather than the language of the monastic cell. Yet I would argue that despite this change in tone and language—a change that would be realized more deeply in his passionate defence of Christ's two natural wills that would begin little over a year later—Maximus' Christological vision had lost nothing of its cosmic breadth or soteriological depth. He has simply come to realize that in order to be the one who brings the world to its redemptive and transforming union with its Creator, Christ must himself be free as both Creator and creature in one acting, free subject—must himself be both *two*, in the irreducible difference of infinite and finite, and *one*, in the indivisible and decisive agency of the God who has "so loved the world" as to save it. In the learned paradoxes of Chalcedonian scholasticism, Maximus found the building materials for his own final, characteristic expression of the Christian Mystery.

Maximus the Confessor and John Philoponus in Their Approach to Theology and Philosophy

Grigory Benevitch

John Philoponus (c. 490 to the 570s) and Maximus the Confessor (c. 580 to 13 August 662) are two of the most important Christian philosophers and thinkers of the first half of the sixth and the first half of the seventh century, respectively, in the Roman-Byzantine Empire. However, it was only in the second half of the twentieth century that their heritage received a proper evaluation and that they began to be systematically studied. Now it is commonly agreed that Philoponus was one of the most outstanding philosophers and scholars who attempted the Christianization of ancient Greek philosophy, while Maximus the Confessor is venerated as one the most important theologians of the seventh century who greatly influenced late Byzantine theology.

It is most informative in this context to compare Philoponus' approaches to philosophy and theology with that of Maximus the Confessor. This comparison is even more significant since recently some scholars, in particular Professor Tollefsen, have expressed a view about Philoponus' possible influence on several points of Maximus' thought.[1] I will approach this theme through a brief periodization of their creative activities.

John Philoponus

Speaking about Philoponus, I suggest a tripartite division of his work with some transitional stages. During Philoponus' first period, he

[1] See A. Lévy, *Le créé et le incréé. Maxime le Confesseur et Thomas d'Aquin: Aux sources de la querelle palamienne* (Paris: Vrin, 2006) 187–191; T. Tollefsen, *The Christocentric Cosmology of St Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford, N.-Y.: Oxford University Press, 2008) 42-44, 52-53, 58, 114.

acted as a philosopher and scholar, a commentator on Aristotle, and a pupil of the Neoplatonic philosopher Ammonius.[2] The next period of Philoponus' creative activity is characterized by his polemics about the question of the eternity of the world, both directly against Proclus (411-485) and indirectly against Ammonius (ca. 435-517). As the polemic in this treatise was specifically directed against a philosophical work, Philoponus' argument in it was purely philosophical. However, Christian views underlie Philoponus' polemics again Proclus. This period of Philoponus' activity could be called his Christianization-of-philosophy-period. He continued his polemics in the next book of this period: *Against Aristotle, on the eternity of the world* (c. 530s), where he began to depart from his general tactics in his polemics against Proclus, by introducing theological argumentation (references to Scripture), though the main part of this work was still purely philosophical.

During the next decade, he had to engage in internal Christian polemics around the method of using ancient science and philosophy employed by a Christian. This theme was discussed in his final cosmological work: *On the Creation of the World* (*De Opificio Mundi*) (late 540s). Philoponus, being optimistic about the possibility of creatively transforming the ancient pagan philosophical heritage in the light of Christian teaching, tried to combine Scripture with Greek science and philosophy. Philoponus' project of this period may be called a project of a creative coexistence between Christianity and philosophy.

During Philoponius' third period of work, he became an active participant of the dogmatic polemics taking place at that time in the Empire. Now, if the first period of his creative activity was purely philosophical and in the second period philosophy and Christian theology coexisted with each other (though in different ways at different times) and were both important for him, the third period was almost purely dedicated to Christian theology. However, during this last period, philosophy did play an important role for Philoponus. By then, he had moved from his projects on the Christianization of philosophy and the creative coexistence of philosophy and Christian faith to a new project, which can be called a project on the "philosophization of Christianity."

[2] See: K. Verrycken, "The development of Philoponus' thought and its chronology," in: R. R. K. Sorabji (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence* (London: Duckworth,1990) 236–237.

The most important work of this period was the *Arbiter* (c. 552).[3] In this treatise Philoponus developed a special Monophysite teaching on particular substances as opposed to the common substance.[4] He relied heavily on the philosophical notion of particular substance elaborated within the school of Ammonius.[5] Later, Philoponus applied the notion of particular substance to the Godhead of the Logos and the other two Persons of the Trinity. His adversaries called this "Tritheism."[6]

Finally, at the end of his life, the consistent application of philosophical concepts to theology drew Philoponus to an original position on the Resurrection.[7] This teaching placed Philoponus' heritage in an even more marginalized position, because it was then even indicted by the majority of the Tritheists. They could not accept the idea of a new creation of a body and different human nature in the Resurrection, as both ideas were not in agreement with the traditional Christian teaching.

Maximus the Confessor

Maximus also preoccupied himself with polemics against the eternity of the world, and in some points, he is close to Philoponus (though some differences are also acknowledged[8]). However, regardless of the problem of the possible influence of Philoponus on Maximus, one has to note that Maximus' approach to philosophy (particularly "natural

[3] U. Lang, *John Philoponus and the controversies over Chalcedon in the sixth century—A study and translation of the "Arbiter"* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001).

[4] Ibid, pp. 60-66.

[5] See A. Busse (ed.) *Ammonius, In Porphyrii isagogen sive quinque voces*, CAG. 3. (Berlin: Reimer, 1891) 17, 21–23; R. Cross, "Gregory of Nyssa on Universals," in: *Vigiliae Christianae* 56 (2002) 377–379. С. В. Месяц, К вопросу о "частных сущностях" у Аммония Александрийского, in: *Богословский вестник* 5–6 (2006) 670–680.

[6] On the inter-Monophysite polemics around Tritheism see: R. Y. Ebied, A. Van Roey, L. R. Wickham, *Peter of Callinicum. Anti-Tritheist Dossier* (Louvain: Peeters, 1981) (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 10). On Chalcedonian polemics against Tritheism see: U. M. Lang, "Notes on John Philoponus and the Tritheist Controversy in the Sixth Century," in: *Oriens Christianus* 85 (2001) 23–40.

[7] See T. Hainthaler, "Johannes Philoponus, Philosoph und Theologe in Alexandria," in: A. Grillmeier, T. Hainthaler. *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*. Bd. 2/4: Die Kirche von Alexandrien mit Nubien und Äthiopien (nach 451)(Freiburg i. Br.; Basel; W.: Herder, 1990) 148–149.

[8] See Tollefsen, *The Christocentric Cosmology of St Maximus*, pp. 52–53, 114. Maximus was close to Philoponus in *Amb.* 10/32: PG 91, 1169B–D и *Amb.* 10/36: PG 91, 1176D–1177B, where he practically repeated Philoponus' statement that all moving things must have a beginning to their movement; See also: *Amb.*39: PG 91, 1181A–1184A.

contemplation") and theology and to the usage of philosophy in theology is different from that of Philoponus. Maximus' literary activity can be divided approximately into three periods with transitional stages, in a similar way to that of Philoponus. However, Maximus' starting point was certainly different. While Philoponus began as a professional philosopher, Maximus came from monastic circles. His first period of writing (c. 624–627) was principally either ascetic or exegetical, where exegesis of Scripture and the Fathers was applied mainly to the ascetic life. Although in these writings he was already arguing against the pagan teaching of the eternity of the world (see *Char.* 4.1–13), rarely did he touch on philosophical issues, because his philosophical apparatus was, in this period, not yet developed.

The second period (c. 628–633) was marked by two great exegetical treatises (*Ambigua to John* and *Questions to Thalassius*). These were written in the context of polemics against Origenism and its radical opposite (extreme anti-Origenism and verbal understanding of Scripture[9]). In these works, Maximus actively applied philosophy and developed a theoretical basis for "natural contemplation,"[10] while still applying his exegesis to the ascetical life and mystical experience. It should be noted that on the one hand, in *Ambigua* one finds "natural contemplations," such as philosophical and logical proofs of the beginning and the end of the created world. In their genre, these passages do not differ much from the proofs of Philoponus. (Though Maximus' polemics against the teaching that the world is eternal did not serve the aims of this polemics exclusively, as they did for Philoponus, but were built into the general aim of his writings—διάβασις through a created world and its phenomena to the union with God). On the other hand, Maximus spoke about natural contemplation as an intuitive mystical experience, close to Platonic contemplation of the Ideas, or paradigms. Following Clement of Alexandria, Evagrius, and Pseudo-Dyonisius, Maximus called these God's *logoi*. In any case, in the *Ambigua* he stated the principle of the equality of natural contemplation and the contemplation of the written law, with the need to contemplate the *logoi* of creation as well as the Scriptural meanings, both equally leading to God.[11]

[9] See G. Benevich, "Maximus the Confessor's polemics against anti-Origenism: Epistulae 6 and 7 as a context for the Ambigua ad Iohannem," in: *Revue d'histoire ecclesiastique*104/1 (2009) 5–15.

[10] See J. Lollar, *To See into the Life of Things: The Contemplation of Nature in Maximus the Confessor's Ambigua to John* (University of Notre Dame, 2011) (PhD diss.).

During the third period (c. 633–658), which for the most part was marked by the Christological polemics around Monoenergism and Monotheletism, Maximus creatively developed the notional apparatus of Orthodox Christology and anthropology, applying philosophy. However, during this third period Maximus still had the soteriological aspect of Christian teaching as his focus.

During every period of his creative activity the theme of salvation, understood as deification in Christ, stood at the center of Maximus' teaching.[12] It was precisely in this context that he used philosophy. Thus in Maximus' case, we deal not with a project of "Christianization of philosophy," "philosophization of Christianity," or even creative coexistence of philosophy and Christianity (all these project could be found in Philoponus), but with a "project" of Christian philosophy. By the latter, I mean the philosophy of a person who was inspired by the main aim of the Christian, which is salvation and union with God.[13]

Maximus and Philoponus

It seems that it is precisely this soteriological dimension which was lacking in Philoponus. Moreover, Christian Wildberg speaks about "the detachment of soteriology from philosophy" which Philoponus' "Christian conviction entailed."[14] According to Wildberg, while "Neoplatinism was a means of salvation" for pagan philosophers of his time (such as Simplicius), Philoponus was free from the need to use philosophy as a means of salvation, because he believed that salvation has been already achieved by Christ. Thus, as a Christian, Philoponus was free from the moral and mystical dimension of Neoplatonic teaching and could develop his philosophy independently of soteriological needs. This is an important reason for Philoponus' achievements in his criticism of Pro-

[11] See Max., *Amb.* 10/17: PG 91, 1128D.

[12] See J.-C. Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme selon saint Maxim le Confesseur* (Paris: Serf, 1996).

[13] The view that the union with God is also a Platonic goal will be discussed below.

[14] C. Wildberg, "Impetus Theory and the Hermeneutics of Science in Simplicius and Philoponus," in *Hyperboreus* 5 (1999) 118.

clus and Aristotle.[15] In proving his thesis, Wildberg refers to Simplicius' and other pagan Neoplatonists' understanding of philosophy:

> [T]he venerated texts lead to the ability to partake of knowledge—which leads to philosophy, which in turn advances the ὁμοίωσις πρὸς τὸ θεῖον, the assimilation to the Godhead, as Simplicius and many other Neoplatonists put it, borrowing a Platonic phrase (*In cael.* 483, 18f.). The common view that philosophy prepares the soul for the mystical destiny stems, of course, from the *Phaedo* (82-84) and appears fully developed in Iamblichus, Simplicius, Damascius, Olympiodorus, and even in the commentaries attributed to David and Elias.[16]

However, it is important to note that Philoponus defined philosophy in the same way as other Neoplatonists. Moreover, this definition is found in his treatises written in his middle period, when he had launched his attack on Proclus and Aristotle. It is found in *In Meteorolog.* (14,1.1.9) (530s) and in *De Opific. Mund.* (242.12) (late 540s). In both places, Philoponus defined philosophy as assimilation to God according to the human capacity (φιλοσοφία ἐστὶν ὁμοίωσις θεῷ, κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἀνθρώπῳ), in quite traditional ways (see Plato, *Theaetetus*, 176b). So, there are no grounds for thinking that Philoponus did not pay attention to the religious dimension of philosophy. However, it is important to know what Philoponus understood by "assimilation to God" and what role philosophy played for him in this assimilation. From the introduction to *In Meteorolog.*, it is clear that Philoponus followed the general division of philosophy into practical and theoretical. Practical philosophy achieves assimilation to God in virtues. Theoretical philosophy's main task is to achieve a true knowledge, discerning what is true from what is false (ἐν μὲν τῇ θεωρίᾳ τοῦ τὸ ψεῦδος διακρίνοντος τῆς ἀληθείας) (14,1.1.15).[17] Having in mind that this statement was made in the introduction to the

[15] Ibid., pp. 117–119.

[16] Ibid., p. 117. Wildberg has proved convincingly that the commentaries (at least some of them) attributed to David and Elias belonged to the pagan authors (see C. Wildberg, "Three Neoplatonic Introductions to Philosophy: Ammonius, David, Elias," *Hermathena* 149 (1990) 33–51.

[17] This understanding of philosophy, and particularly of theory and practice, is met in Philoponus' early commentaries (see *in analytica poster.*, ed. Wallies, *CAG* 13.3. 2, 29 and *in de anim.*, ed. Hayduck, *CAG* 15. 554, 17). This definition is also found in Philoponus' teacher, Ammonius (*in category.*, ed. Busse, *CAG* 4.4, 29). Philoponus in *In Meteorol.* is quite close to this place in Ammonius. However, in Ammonius' passage in this context, nothing is said about assimilation to God.

treatise where Philoponus criticized Aristotle's physics,[18] it can be said that Philoponus' radical criticism of Aristotle and Proclus was a project to obtain and spread true knowledge distinguished from false, understood as a philosophical way of assimilation to God. Thus, it is not correct to argue that for him philosophy was detached from salvation understood as assimilation to God. Indeed, I believe it would be correct to say that Philoponus drew his inspiration from the Christian tradition that particularly rejected the eternity of the world. One may presuppose that, for him, this tradition together with the Scripture was a source of general teaching on the beginning of the world. In other words, it gave him a basis for true knowledge (its Biblical "image"). As for the philosophical analysis and proof of this knowledge, that was the task of a philosopher, who obtained assimilation to God through his philosophical endeavors. Speaking about these endeavors, I agree with Wildberg that Philoponus' "constructive criticism" found already in his early works was an extremely fruitful methodology, which allowed him to achieve important results.[19]

As for assimilation to God in virtues, Philoponus paid attention to this theme in *De Opific. Mund.* (Book 6.7-8), where he drew a distinction between "image" and "likeness" and referred to the Scriptures underlining the need of a free choice for the virtuous life in Christ for assimilation to God in knowledge and in virtues to occur. It is precisely in this context that he invoked a definition of philosophy made by "foreign" (pagan) sages (i.e., as "assimilation to God according to the human capacity") and compared it with the Christian teaching of obtaining God's likeness. Speaking about the similitude to God in virtuous life, Philoponus invoked a classical Christian teaching, with a reference to Paul (Gal. 2:20 and 1 Cor. 1:11).[20] However, to my knowledge this passage from *De Opific. Mund.* is the only place in Philoponus where he dedicated several pages to the theme of the Christian virtuous life. Moreover, there he repeated more or less common themes from a Christian tradition, and these are not original. It is clear that the true

[18] See É. Évrard, "Les convictions religieuses de Jean Philopon et la date du Commentaire aux 'Météorologiques'," in: *Bulletin de l'Akadémie Royale de Belgique, classe de letters* 6 (1953) 299–357.

[19] See Wildberg, "Impetus theory and the hermeneutics of science", 123.

[20] See *De Opif. Mund.* 243.1-4, ed. W. Reichardt.

"nerve" of Philoponus' heritage is not the theme of virtues and practical philosophy, but theoretical philosophy with regards to knowledge, which discerns true knowledge from the false.

At the same time, in all Philoponius' voluminous writings practically no attention is paid to ascetics, prayer, or to Christian mysticism (in the sense of a teaching on deification understood as a union with God). Philoponus did mention assimilation to God in two places, but he was not dealing with this theme as a *problem* of his philosophy. In this sense, Wildberg is correct characterizing "the detachment of soteriology from philosophy" in Philoponus.[21] Most probably, Philoponus understood his philosophy as assimilation to God, but he was not dealing with the *theory* of this assimilation or deification as such. This was despite the fact that for Neoplatonism (the dominant "pagan" teaching of the late antiquity) this theme was central for the majority of philosophers since at least Plotinus.[22] Indeed, Maximus was much closer to this most important theme of Neoplatonic thought than was Philoponus.[23]

I will give two examples showing how this difference between Philoponus and Maximus affects their doctrines. Let me take Philoponus' Tritheism that was criticized by Maximus in *Char.* 2.29.[24] For Maximus, the concrete union of the Persons of the Trinity, defended in his

[21] Wildberg, "Impetus theory and the hermeneutics of science", 118.

[22] However, it should be noted that in the fifth and sixth centuries interest in these themes was more typical for the Athenian philosophical school than for the Alexandrian school, to which Philoponus belonged.

[23] However, unlike the Neoplatonists, Maximus spoke about deification not only in the personal life, but also within the broader context of God's economy of salvation and ecclesiology. This ecclesiological dimension was entirely lacking in Philoponus, even in his Christological works.

[24] Where in particular Maximus writes: "Both the division and the union [in the Holy Trinity] are extraordinary (or 'paradoxical'). But what is there extraordinary, if as one man with another, so likewise the Son and the Father, is both united and separate and nothing more?" (*Char.* 2.29, translation is from Polycarp Sherwood (ed. & tr.), *St. Maximus the Confessor: The Ascetic Life,* the Four Centuries on Charity (N.-Y.: Paulist Press, 1955) (Ancient Christian Writers, 21) 159. That may be compared to Philoponus' idea: "As we are one substance solely in thought by the common notion of substance (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας), whereas, however, in reality and truth we understand ourselves to be many men, so there is a single God solely in our thought by the common nature; but in reality and truth there are three of them, the Godhead being distributed according to the hypostases" (Ebied, Van Roey, Wickham, Peter of Callinicum... 31–32). Detailed analysis of *Char.* 2.29 will appear in my article "Maximus Confessor's polemics against Tritheism and his Trinitarian teaching," in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 105/2 (2012), S. 603-618 (in print).

polemics against Tritheism, was the foundation of the very possibility of the union of a created one (i.e. a human being who achieved oneness in his Christian life) to the One God. Following Neoplatonic tradition and Pseudo Dionysius,[25] Maximus spoke about such a union of "one" with the One. This theme is found in *Amb.* 10/45: PG 91, 1200A-B in the contemplation of the addition of an alpha to Abraham's name, which was explained as a symbol of one (made one through detachment from all created beings) coming to the One.[26] Interpreting the mystical meaning of the Trisagion sung at the Liturgy, Maximus connected the union of the soul with God's hidden oneness and its deification.[27]

This example is sufficient to show how, for Maximus (who was deeply rooted in the Neoplatonic mystical tradition), the philosophical aspect of his Trinitarian teaching was connected to the importance he placed on deification, which here we find to be different from that of Philoponus.

Having noted this difference, we may also address the famous *logoi* theory. Both thinkers used it—in particular, Philoponus in his polemics with Proclus against the eternity of the world[28] and Maximus in his polemics with the Origenists about the preexistence of minds.[29] In Maximus, however, Neoplatonic *logoi* theory had a dynamic soteriological dimension which, in this context, was not discussed in Philoponus. For Maximus, God's *logoi* were not only His eternal plans about creation, which God realizes in a certain consequence, they were also dynamic principles of our movement towards Him. They were providential *logoi,* principles of our being, well-being, and ever-well-being with God.

[25] See Ps-Dionys. *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, ed. G. Heil and A.M. Ritter. 118.2-3, where the monks' task is defined as making themselves one according to the One and approaching the Holy One: μοναχοῖς ὡς πρὸς τὸ ἓν αὐτῶν ὀφειλόντων ἑνοποιεῖσθαι καὶ πρὸς ἱερὰν μονάδα.

[26] "By faith he was hiddenly assimilated to the reason concerning the monad, according to which he came to have a form of unity, or rather out of many was made one, magnificently and wholly drawn up alone to God alone" (translation from: A. Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (London: Routledge, 1996) 150. See also *QD* 39.3-6, éd. Declerck, here when speaking about Abraham, who approached God as one approaches the One in knowledge (ὡς μόνος τῷ μόνῳ κατὰ τὴν γνῶσιν προσχωρήσας), Maximus followed loosely Plotinus (*Enn.* 6. 9.11.51, ed. Henry, Schwyzer (φυγὴ μόνου πρὸς μόνον)).

[27] See *Myst.* 23.86-96, éd. R. Cantarella.

[28] See *Cont. Procl.* II.5: 37.1-10; 41.8-22; IV.9: 78.8-24, ed. Rabe.

[29] See *Amb.* 7: PG 91, 1069-1101.

Maximus' theory of *logoi* was dynamic, whereas Philoponus' theory was not connected with the problem of the union with God and movement towards Him. It only addressed the problem of creation, not that of salvation. For Maximus, unlike Philoponus, his *logoi* theory was part and parcel of his Christology and ecclesiology. Furthermore, Maximus' teaching on contemplation was also grounded in his understanding of *logoi* as contemplated in the Logos. He clearly distinguishes between the contemplation of creation, which testifies the existence of the Creator (such contemplation in its content is close to Philoponus' concerns[30]), and the contemplation of the principles of creation *in* God. Being united with the One, saints contemplated the *logoi* of creation most purely and truly.[31] Such a double perspective on contemplation is typical for Maximus, but it is lacking in Philoponus.

Summary

In summing up this paper[32] I would say that at the crossroads of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages in Byzantium there were two possibilities for the future development of Christian thought. One of these was realized by Philoponus, the other by Maximus. Although mainly taking opposite views on Christology, anthropology, and Trinitarian teaching, both of them share one common basis. In their cosmology and their views on the relationship of the Creator to the world, both thinkers opposed Neoplatonic teaching on the eternity of the world.

With respect to his teaching with deification at its center, Maximus was quite close to the main idea of Neoplatonic mystical philoso-

[30] Though Philoponus also toiled far more than Maximus to clarify the relations between God and creation and the laws and nature of creation as such.

[31] In *Myst.* 5. 196–205, éd. R. Cantarella, Maximus says that "when the soul has become unified ... its head [i.e., mind] is crowned by the first and only and unique Word and God... Gazing with a simple understanding on him who is not outside it... it will itself understand the principles *(logoi)* of beings" (G. C. Berthold (ed. and tr.), *Maximus Confessor. Selected writings* (N.-Y.: Paulist Press, 1985) 194). Thus, it is clear that Maximus speaks here about mystical contemplation of the *logoi* in the Logos after the union with God, and not about the natural, philosophic contemplation of creation which testifies about one Creator.

[32] This paper is a brief variant (it deals predominantly with only one theme) of my longer paper: "John Philoponus and Maximus the Confessor at the Crossroads of Philosophical and Theological Thought in Late Antiquity," in *Scrinium*. T. 7–8: Ars Christiana. In memoriam Michail F. Murianov (21.XI.1928–6.VI.1995). Edited by R. Krivko, B. Lourié, and A. Orlov (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2011–2012) Part One. P. 102-130.

phy. However, in his anthropology Maximus was entirely free from both Neoplatonic teaching on soul-body relations (particularly the teaching about souls' preexistence) and from the opposite teaching on the preexistence of the body to the soul (which can be found in late Philoponus and many other Christian and Jewish thinkers).[33]

In addition, I would also observe that the ultimate fate of both Philoponus and Maximus on a personal level can be seen in the light of their thought. On the one hand, Philoponus, who held a highly "individualistic" vision of the Trinity and believed in the so-called "particular substance" of each human being as well as each Person of the Trinity, ended his life being marginalized by the majority of his contemporaries from all Christian camps, while at the same time being *persona non grata* with the circle of pagan philosophers.[34] On the other hand, Maximus, with his stress on the union of "one" to the One, died as a confessor following his exile from the civilized world to Caucasus.

It is my view that in Maximus and Philoponus we face ultimate expressions of the principles of individuality (constituted in opposition of "one" to "many") and personhood (constituted in relation of one to the One). While Philoponus, avoiding Neoplatonic mysticism, substituted some "pagan" aspects of Neoplatonism with ideas that would lie at the foundation of future post-Aristotelian cosmology and physics, Maximus, following Pseudo-Dionysius, transformed the mystical aspects of Neoplatonism, rescuing this teaching to be used in the service of Christian philosophy and theology.

[33] See M.-H. Congourdeau, "Maxime le Confesseur et l'humanité de l'embryon," in: *Nouvelle revue théologique* III (1989) 693–709.

[34] See C. Wildberg, "Olympiodrus," *Stanford Encyclopedia for Philosophy*, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/olympiodorus/ (accessed February 2011).

II

Person, Nature, Freedom

Person and Nature in the Theology of St Maximus the Confessor

Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon

Introduction

St Maximus has been the subject of extensive discussion in our time. The interest in the thought of this Father extends across confessional borders, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant, reaching even the area of philosophy and to some degree that of science. St Maximus is an example of the wide, all-embracing nature of theology: there is no aspect or area of existence to which theology should remain indifferent: cosmology, anthropology, art, ecclesial and spiritual life, etc.

There are different angles from which to approach this great thinker. In the present paper we intend to raise the question of the relation of nature to person in St Maximus' thought. This question is of particular importance not only for patristics but also for systematic theology, especially from the viewpoint of Orthodox theology. Person and nature have acquired different meanings in the course of history and have become central and decisive in the philosophy of our time, especially under the influence of modern existentialist thought. It is also a crucial subject for western culture in our time. What does St Maximus have to say about all this?

Before we address the question of St Maximus' relevance for today, we have to clarify the historical situation. The subject of the relation between nature and person in St Maximus has been widely discussed in our time, and yet there are important aspects of it that remain unclear or controversial. There is, for example, a divergence of opinion between the position of J.-C. Larchet, on the one hand, and other scholars such

as von Balthasar, Dalmais, Riou, Heinzer, and especially Garrigues, on the other, as to the role played by the person in salvation and *theosis*,[1] and it was only recently that Larchet expressed strong disagreement also with Professor Yannaras and myself on similar matters.[2] It appears that the subject "nature-person" remains a controversial one, particularly with regard to the thought of St Maximus.

Similar problems arise with regard to freedom: does nature involve necessity and person freedom? What does St Maximus' anti-Monothelite position concerning the concept of will (θέλησις) tell us about freedom? How does the teaching of Maximus on this subject affect his view of asceticism and of eschatology?

In order to answer these questions we propose to begin with an examination of terminology: what is the meaning that Maximus gives to the terms "nature" and "person"?

The Ontological Map

The terms by which to indicate "being" were clarified and established in patristic thought by the Cappadocian Fathers. The circumstances that led to this clarification are well-known and have to do with the need to express in human (philosophical) language the mystery of the Holy Trinity. The formula that finally prevailed in Trinitarian theology is that of "one nature, three persons." Nature and person have thus become indispensible key-terms in patristic theology. But what was the sense in which these terms were used by the Cappadocian Fathers?

For the Cappadocian Fathers[3] the notion of being consists in answering two questions: *what* (τί) someone or something is, and how (ὅπως, πῶς) someone or something is. The first of these two questions points to the *nature* (φύσις or οὐσία), while the second one to the *person* (ὑπόστασις or πρόσωπον). These two, οὐσία or φύσις and ὑπόστασις or πρόσωπον, can be distinguished but in no way separated from each other. There is no person without nature, and there is no nature without hypostasis. The two taken together constitute what we call "being." (I have argued elsewhere[4] that the rendering only of οὐσία and not of

[1] See J.-C. Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme selon saint Maxime le Confesseur*, 1996, *passim*.
[2] J.-C. Larchet, *Personne et nature*, 2011, pp. 207-396.
[3] See esp. Basil, *C. Eunom.* I,14-15; Gregory Naz. *Theol. Or.* III,16, etc.
[4] See my *Communion and Otherness*, 2006, p.124f.

person with the term "being," which is very common in the English speaking world—see, for example, the translation of ὁμοούσιος with the phrase "of one being" in the Creed—would sound strange to the Cappadocian Fathers.) This point is extremely important, for it is to be found at the root of controversies in our time, even among the Orthodox, concerning the relation between nature and person.

The Cappadocian integration of nature and person into a single ontological whole called "being" was not quite absorbed in the West. This led to the disjunction between nature and person in medieval scholastic thought, the first representing the "objective" and "necessary" reality and the second the "subjective" and "free" individual who can distance himself from nature.[5] The dispute between realists and nominalists in the late Middle Ages[6], the juxtaposition between nature and the human subject which we encounter in Francis Bacon,[7] Descartes,[8] Kant,[9] and a whole philosophical tradition leading into modern existentialism[10]—all these are but the outcome of the disjunction between nature and person, a disjunction which is totally absent in the Greek Fathers.

If I mention this deviation of Western thought from that of the Greek Fathers with regard to the concepts of nature and person, it is because the medieval and modern western dichotomy between person and nature lies behind the assumptions of some contemporary Ortho-

[5] Already in Thomas Aquinas we encounter the dialectic between what is "natural" and what is "free": "Rien de plus constant dans la pensée de saint Thomas que cette dialectique du 'naturel' et du 'libre.'" M.-J. Nicolas, " L'idée de nature dans la pensée de saint Thomas d'Aquin," in *Revue Thomiste* (1974) 533-590 (p. 554). Person, as distinct from nature, is understood as the "subject" endowed with consciousness and freedom and as standing *vis-à-vis* nature, albeit acting always according to nature. *Ibid* p. 562-564.
[6] See M.-J. Nicolas, "L'idée de nature," p. 535 concerning Scotus and Occam.
[7] Francis Bacon, *Instauratio Magna. The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. J. Spedding, R.L. Ellis and D.Herth, 1857-1874, vol. V, p. 145: Nature should not only be studied "free and large" but even more when "under constraint," when "by art and the hand of man she is forced out of her natural state and squeezed and moulded."
[8] Thus, R. Descartes, *Discours de la méthode*. Texte et commentaire E. Gilson, 1947, p. 61: with the progress of science we shall become "maîtres et possesseurs de la nature"
[9] Im. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Preface to the second edition: human reason must approach nature "as an appointed judge who compels the witness to answer questions which he himself proposes."
[10] For example, J.-P. Sartre, *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*, 1946, pp. 21-22, and *L'être et le néant*, 1950, p. 457: "l'essence est, pour la réalité humaine, postérieure à l'existence. Il se définit par le choix de ses fins."

dox theologians in their discussion of the relation of these two concepts in theology. Thus, those wishing to attach more significance to nature than to person in the thought of the Greek Fathers, including St Maximus in particular (and in order to fight the personalism of certain authors, like myself), would tend to see in personalism a threat to the importance of nature in theology (Larchet is a good example), and *vice-versa* personalist thinkers would fight essentialism as an enemy to the importance of the person in theology. We are, therefore, confronted with the need to recover the organic and unbreakable unity of nature and person, with which the Greek Fathers operated in ontology. The present paper is an attempt to contribute to this recovery, with particular reference to the thought of St Maximus.

Maximus follows faithfully the Cappadocian Fathers with regard to the use of the terms nature and person in ontology, adding a few precisions which were necessitated by the theological controversies of his time. We can summarize his position in the following points:

1. *Nature and person are two indispensible and mutually conditioned aspects of every being.* All beings possess a nature and a *hypostasis* inseparably linked with each other. At this point it must be noted that Maximus, who, following the Cappadocian Fathers, identifies in principle the term *hypostasis* with that of person, avoids using "person" in referring to entities other than the human being (and, of course, God). A mouse, for example, would possess hypostasis but would not, as it has been wrongly suggested,[11] be called a person. The avoidance of St Maximus to use person with reference to non-intelligent beings must be noted and studied. It appears to be suggestive of a nuance in ontology that links the person with freedom via intelligence, which for Maximus is a characteristic, albeit natural characteristic, of self-determination. Although this is but a suggestion, it may well point to the interpenetration between person and nature, which is so characteristic of Greek Patristic thought and which is overshadowed by the later dichotomy between person and nature to which we have referred. This may mean that the natural and the personal qualities co-inhere so deeply that the clear-cut distinctions between them, to which we are used, may not be adequate, after all.

[11] As, for example, by Melchisedek Törönen, *Union and Distinction in the Thought of St. Maximus the Confessor*, 2008, pp. 54-55.

2. *Nature* as φύσις which is a plastic word in Greek, has undergone with Maximus the same shift as *ousia* from a concrete object to *an abstract universal*:

> "Nature (φύσις) is, according to the philosophers, the principle of movement and rest; but for the Fathers it is genus (εἶδος) of the many and different members, applied to *what* something is (ὁποῖον τί ἐστι). *Ousia* is, according to the philosophers, a self-existent thing which does not need something else in order to be constituted; but according to the Fathers, it is the natural being (ὀντότης φυσικὴ) *of many and different hypostases*" (*Op. Th. et Pol.* PG 91, 276A).

It is clear from this passage that φύσις for Maximus (and the Fathers, as he says) is defined not in itself but in relation to the hypostases. Following Leontius of Byzantium and Leontius of Jerusalem Maximus[12] would reject the idea that nature subsists by itself; for him it is rather the hypostasis, not nature, that subsists by itself (see *Opusc.* 23, PG 91, 264AB). There is nothing concrete about nature; the concrete and self-existing in being is the hypostasis, not nature. We cannot refer to nature *as such*; it is always *the nature of a hypostasis*. Ἀνυπόστατον equals ἀνύπαρκτον[13]. This is an extremely important point. It not only excludes any disjunction between nature and person, but it gives also a different meaning to hypostasis, quite different from what we gather from the definition of John of Damascus as "a nature with properties" (φύσις μετὰ ἰδιωμάτων).[14] In St Maximus' understanding, it is not the nature that is the subject of a hypostasis (nature possessing hypostasis) but the reverse: *the hypostasis is the possessor of the nature; nature is the possession of the hypostasis.* This is why Maximus uses the definition of hypostasis as "nature with idioms" (*Ep.* 13, PG 91, 258AB), *but attributes it to the philosophers, not to the Fathers*: "Hypostasis is, according to the philosophers, *ousia* with *idiomata*. But according to the Fathers, it is the particular man as distinct (ἀφοριζόμενος) personally (προσωπικῶς) from the other men" (*Opusc.* 16. PG 91, 276B).

This may appear at first sight as an insignificant difference, but, as we shall see later in connection with Christology, it is of crucial impor-

[12] See D. Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 2004, p. 110.

[13] See *Amb.* PG 91,1261D. Cf. with reference to evil as ἀνυπόστατον, *Ibid.* 1333A and *Scholia*, PG 4,304D.

[14] John Dam. *c. Jac.* 52, PG 94,1461A; *Dial.* 30. *ibid.* 593A.

tance. Nature in itself simply does not exist; it is an abstract universal, which exists only as hypostases, i.e., when it is hypostasized. This Maximus makes clearer in *Ep.* 15 (PG 91, 545AB) when he quotes St Basil[15] with reference to the *homoousion*: "for nothing is homoousion in itself but [as] other to other." Those, therefore, who refer to the *ousia* (or the *homoousion*) as such and build an ontology on that basis have departed fundamentally from the spirit of the Greek Fathers. Nature stands for the common (κοινόν), but this κοινόν owes its existence to the particular. It is otherness that constitutes sameness, not the reverse. The self-existent of the philosophers (the ousia *as such*) has been condemned by the Fathers to non-existence (ἀνυπόστατον=ἀνύπαρκτον). Hypostasis is, of course, inconceivable without nature (*Op. theol.* 14, 264A). *Yet, it is not nature that gives being or existence to hypostasis*[16]*, but it is hypostasis that makes nature abandon its abstract character, which is void of ontological content and acquire being.* In this sense, we can say that the person "causes" nature to exist.

So, what does nature contribute to being if it is not itself but the hypostasis that makes it be? Why is hypostasis inconceivable without nature? Why in other words—to put it in terms of later philosophy—is not Maximus (or any of the Greek Fathers) a "nominalist"? Nature has as its proper *raison d'être* to indicate the *common* or *κοινόν* in existence ("nature τὸν τοῦ εἶναι λόγον κοινὸν ἐπέχει, *Opusc.* PG 91, 264AB). The Fathers realize that God as well as humanity possess a unity, a one-ness. This unity does not produce difference—this would have been Neoplatonism. Nature does not give being to hypostases, as if it were their "cause," but it holds them together in one κοινωνία τῆς φύσεως.[17] The function, therefore, of nature is this and nothing else: *to relate the hypostases to each other, to make them relational.*[18] This leads us to the next point.

3. *Hypostasis/person and atomon*: are these two notions identical in St Maximus' thought? I have had the opportunity in another study[19] to object to the view that for the Cappadocian Fathers *prosopon*/hypostasis and *atomon* mean the same thing. I can now repeat this objection with regard to St Maximus.

[15] Basil, *Ep.* 52,3. PG 32,393C.

[16] For the Greek Fathers, there is no difference between "being" and "existence."

[17] Cf. Basil (Gregory of Nyssa?), *Ep.* 38. PG 32,325f.

[18] Cf. my *Being as Communion*, 1985, p. 84: "substance *possesses almost by definition a relational character*" (original italics).

[19] In my *Communion and Otherness*, 2006, pp. 171f. (Response to criticism by L. Turcescu).

It is true that Maximus appears to use ἄτομον as the equivalent of πρόσωπον, for example in *Opusc.* (PG 91, 276AB). And yet, a careful study of his work would reveal nuances that force us to qualify this statement. Ἄτομον remains for Maximus a category *in the realm of essences*, and as such it cannot be applied to either Christ or the Trinity. Thus, with regard to Christ he writes:

> [W]e cannot call ἄτομον the synthetic person of Christ. *Because it has no relation with the division of the most general genus through subsequent inferior genoi into the most particular eidos.* (*Opusc.* PG 91, 201D)[20]

Ἄτομον differs, therefore, fundamentally from hypostasis and πρόσωπον because it falls under the category of nature. It may be used as equivalent to hypostasis only in so far as it indicates particularity and indivisibility. If it is identified with hypostasis/person it leads to a total confusion between nature and hypostasis, and for this reason, as I have pointed out in replying to Turcescu, it is not without reason that the formula "three ἄτομα" was never used in tradition with reference to the Holy Trinity. Maximus gives the philosophical reason for this. In the light of these qualifications, Larchet and others[21] appear to be wrong in their view that ἄτομον, ὑπόστασις, and πρόσωπον can be used as synonymous.

4. The specific contribution of Maximus to ontology lies in his introduction of the concept of λόγος into the theological terminology. This term had been more or less removed from the theological vocabulary after the difficulties it had created in connection with Origenism and the Arian controversy. Maximus rescues this term from oblivion and applies it precisely to the relation between nature and person.

The starting point and basis for Maximus was again the Cappadocian Fathers. These Fathers, as we have seen, operated in their Trinitarian theology with a distinction between the τί ἐστιν and the ὅπως ἐστιν, the first indicating the nature and the second the person in the Trinity.

[20] It is, therefore, a mistake to confuse Maximus with John of Damascus on this point.

[21] J.-C. Larchet, *Personne et nature*, p. 272f. Cf. Melch. Törönen, *Union and Distinction*, in spite of nuances on p. 51.

The ὅπως ἐστι was also rendered with the phrase τρόπος ὑπάρξεως. Thus φύσις was rendered with the expression λόγος φύσεως and ὑπόστασις/πρόσωπον with τρόπος ὑπάρξεως. Having followed a history which has been carefully analyzed by Polycarp Sherwood,[22] this pair λόγος φύσεως—τρόπος ὑπάρξεως reached St Maximus who made extensive use of it in his theology.

We shall not dwell in detail in this subject here. We shall limit ourselves to some points which appear to be controversial in the Maximian scholarship. The most important of these points relates to the question whether the term λόγος is limited to nature in the thought of St Maximus or should be also extended to apply to the person as well. Similarly, the question arises whether the term τρόπος which is principally applicable to the hypostasis (the τρόπος ὑπάρξεως)—at least originally in the Cappadocian Fathers—is applied by St Maximus also to the level of nature.

In the first place with regard to λόγος, the evidence in the works of St Maximus abundantly demonstrates that for him λόγος is not limited to nature but is extended to the level of person (chiefly the second person of the Trinity). Larchet, therefore, is not justified in criticizing us for applying the concept of *logos* to personhood both in a protological and, especially, in an eschatological setting[23]. Here is some of the evidence in our support.

A study of *Amb.* 7 (PG 91, 1077C and 1080Bf.) shows clearly that for St Maximus the passage from the natural λόγος of being to the personal Logos of Christ who holds in Himself all these λόγοι takes place so easily that Sherwood must note that the transition is "not always remarked perhaps by the author [Maximus] himself."[24] For Maximus, the λόγοι of nature are meaningless, if not non-existent, unless they are incorporated in the person of the Logos, i.e., unless nature is assumed by the hypostasis. This is not only protological but, above all, eschatological, as this "enhypostasization" of the *logoi* in the second Person of the Trinity as the Incarnate Christ constitutes the final σκοπὸς of their

[22] P. Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of St. Maximus the Confessor*, 1955, p. 155ff.

[23] J.-C. Larchet, *Personne et nature*, p. 246f.

[24] P. Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua*, p. 170 n. 60. Cf. D. Staniloae's commentary on the *Ambigua* in *Philosophical and Theological Questions*, ed. By Apostolike Diakonia, 1978, p. 170f. (in Greek).

existence (see also the first sections of *Lib. Ascet.* and *Quest. Thal.* 60, PG 90, 621A).[25]

With regard to τρόπος, Larchet appears to disagree strongly with a whole series—almost all the rest—of Maximian scholars with regard to relating τρόπος with hypostasis.[26] Arguing that the expression τρόπος ὑπάρξεως appears in Maximus only a few times in the Trinitarian context, he rejects the use of this expression in a personalist way by scholars, such as von Balthasar, Dalmais, Heinzer, Schönborn, and above all Garrigues, and insists that in Maximus this expression refers *to nature* as τρόπος τῆς φύσεως.[27] If this position were to be accepted, it would, of course, imply a radical departure by St Maximus from the previous tradition in the use of the expression beginning with the Cappadocians.

Larchet interprets Maximus with categories borrowed from Palamite (or rather Neo-Palamite) theology. The role of hypostasis in the union of the two natures in Christ is exhausted in being the instrument for the exchange of the *energeiai* between the natures; there is nothing strictly speaking "hypostatic" granted to us in Christ since, it is argued, the hypostatic properties are not communicable. This Larchet calls a "substantive" ("entitative") conception of divinization through the hypostatic union.

In proposing this interpretation Larchet rejects the views of Dalmais, Heinzer, Shönborn, and, most notably, Garrigues who see in the ὑποστατικῶς the υἱοθεσία (filiation) as obedience to the will of the Father—what Larchet calls a "moral" interpretation of ὑποστατικῶς. This interpretation appears to use categories borrowed from pre-Nicaean theology (especially, Irenaeus and the Bible).

While this latter interpretation seems to "moralize" the hypostatic union, Larchet's proposal leaves us with the question of whether Christ's hypostasis contributes to our salvation anything *hypostatic* (personal), apart from transmitting divine energies which are common to all three Persons of the Trinity. In other words, is our salvation and

[25] The use of the same term (λόγος) both for the Person of the Son and for the λόγος united in him cannot be understood without reference to the *hypostasization* of the latter in the former. This means that the λόγοι are united in the *Person* of the Logos, not in His nature (which would involve the other Persons of the Trinity).

[26] J.-C. Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme*, pp. 342-358.

[27] Repeated in his *Personne et nature*, p. 264f in criticism of my own position.

theosis in any sense a χριστοποίησις,[28] an υἱοθεσία, our ability to call with Christ and in Christ, or rather *as* "Christs" (by grace), His Father "*our* Father" thus being recognized by Him as "sons" in the person-hypostasis of His Son? Are we granted in Christ only divine energies or also something *filial*? It is not an accident that Larchet is forced by his interpretation of ὑποστατικῶς to distinguish between θέωσις and υἱοθεσία and regard the latter as a preliminary stage of the former.[29]

At the bottom of this debate lies the medieval and modern disjunction between nature and person, to which we referred at the beginning of this paper. The understanding of being ("entitatif"), in terms of "nature," and the person, in terms of "intentionality" and "obedience," presupposes the medieval and modern pair: nature (=*res*) and person (psychological and moral "subject"). But υἱοθεσία *is* ontological ("entitative") because it involves not just obedience, etc. but a τρόπος ὑπάρξεως, and ὕπαρξις *is* being. The fact that in Christ we are sons by grace and not by nature does not mean that we are not *ontologically* sons of the Father. We do not have to exclude the person and to resort to the energies, i.e., to nature, in order to avoid the purely "intentional" and "moral" understanding of υἱοθεσία. Ὑιοθεσία does point to the level of personhood, but person as hypostasis involves a σχέσις that "enhypostasizes" the energies. All energies operate hypostatically. To distinguish between υἱοθεσία and θέωσις, in the way Larchet does, amounts to the danger of de-hypostasizing nature, and to interpret υἱοθεσία in terms of morality and intentionality, as Garrigues and others seem to do, is to be at risk of "denaturalizing" the person. The argument that the hypostatic qualities are not communicable, which is so often repeated, would be valid only if we were to be regarded as sons of the Father κατὰ φύσιν (the Son cannot be Father, etc.). But at the level of χάρις (sons by grace) we are certainly not talking about such a communicability.

With regard to St Maximus' position, we find it hard to accept that the Confessor departs so radically from the previous patristic tradition which overwhelmingly identifies theosis with υἱοθεσία. Not only Ire-

[28] The idea that by being baptized and confirmed we become "Christs" is very old. E.g. Origen, *In Ioan.* 6. PG 14,212C; Methodius of Olympus, *Symp.* 8,8. PG 18,149C; Macarius Aeg., *Homily* 43,1. PG 34,772C. Also, John Dam., *De fid. Orth.* 4,9. PG 94,1125B: the oil of Baptism "makes us Christs."

[29] J.-C. Larchet, *La divinisation*, p. 623f.

naeus, but Athanasius and, above all, Cyril of Alexandria emphatically identify these two.[30] We do not have to go to the fourteenth century in order to interpret Maximus. There are passages in his work that connect and identify deification with filiation. Suffice it to mention *Amb.* 42 (91, 1345D-1348A):

> Those who treat of divine things in a mystical way...say that humanity first came into existence in the image of God assuredly so as to be born of the Spirit by choice and receive in addition the likeness which comes upon it through the keeping of the divine commandments, so that the same being should be the creation of God by nature *and also the Son of God and God through the Spirit by grace* (Ὑὸς δὲ Θεοῦ καὶ Θεὸς διὰ Πνεύματος κατὰ χάριν). For it was not possible in any other way for a created human being to be proved a *Son of God and a God through deification by grace* (κατὰ τὴν ἐκ χάριτος θέωσιν) unless first he had been born in the Spirit by choice.

The connection to the point of identification between καθ' ὁμοίωσιν, θέωσις, and υἱοθεσία are more than evident in this text.[31]

5. A few remarks must be added here about the "image" and "likeness" in their relation to nature and person. Larchet rightly insists that the "image," according to Maximus, belongs to human nature. But the subject is more complicated than it appears at first sight for the following reasons:

a) Many natural qualities which Maximus connects with the "image," such as incorruption, immortality, etc. (see *Ep.* 6, PG 91, 429B, etc.) are categorically excluded by him as qualities of nature and are attributed to grace and the eschata (e.g., *Amb.* PG 91, 1325BC; 1348D; 1392B).

b) The "image" is inseparably connected by Maximus with the λόγος, but the λόγοι are not, as we have just seen, unrelated to the second Person of the Trinity who contains them in His Person (not in His nature, for it is only He, and no other Person of the Trinity, that contains them). As is the case with Gregory of Nyssa,[32] for Maximus too we are images of God *as images of the Image* which is the Son in His relation

[30] References in my *Communion and Otherness*, p. 30f, n.51.

[31] For more references, see N. Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, 2004, p. 282f.

[32] See the detailed analysis of the Trinitarian roots of the *imago* idea in Gregory of Nyssa, in G. Maspero, *Trinity and Man. Gregory of Nyssa's Ad Ablabium*, 2007, p. 129ff.

with the Father,[33] and there is (following in this case Gregory the Theologian) a correspondence between *natural* qualities of the human being (mind, word, spirit) and the *personal* existence of God as Father, Son and Spirit (see *Amb.* PG 91, 1088A and 1196A).[34]

c) Similar observations must be made with regard to the *virtues*. In his conversation with Pyrrus, Maximus calls the virtues "natural" (φυσικαί εἰσιν αἱ ἀρεταὶ PG 91, 309B). And yet, not only do they require our προαίρεσις in order to be realized, but they exist in their fullness and their "οὐσία" only *in the Person of Christ* (*Amb.* PG 91, 1081CD). The person, divine or human, is the *sine qua non* condition for nature to exist in all its manifestations.[35]

The Christological Grounding

Nature and person are fully and truly revealed only in Christ. For St Maximus, Christ is the A and the Ω, the true God and the true human being. The Cappadocians may have got their concepts of person and nature from Trinitarian theology, but Maximus receives them from Christology.

Garrigues[36] makes the suggestion that there were two periods in the development of St Maximus' thought. The first coincided with his monastic formation in which, under the influence of the Dionysian

[33] Cf. L. Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 1965, pp. 137-139.

[34] Cf. P. Sherwood, *St Maximus the Confessor. The Ascetic Life. The Four Centuries on Charity*, 1955, p. 41. L. Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos*, 1985, p. 46f., speaks of the human being as *imago Trinitatis* in the thought of St Maximus.

[35] The view, therefore, that in Maximus, and the Greek Fathers in general, the idea of the "image" relates to the human nature has to be strongly qualified. This view is by no means universal in patristic thought. There is a variety of interpretations of the *imago* idea in the Greek Fathers, and Larchet's view that "the various conceptions of the image are related to the nature of man" (*Personne et nature*, p. 338) appears to contradict the evidence. Thus, St. John Chrysostom, for example, openly rejects the idea that the *imago* relates to the nature of man and prefers a personalist approach: "the κατ' εἰκόνα is not a quality (or value) of *ousia* (οὐκ οὐσίας ἐστὶν ἀξία) but a likeness of dominion (ἀρχῆς ὁμοιότης)." *In Gen. hom.* 9,2. PG 53,78. Cf. Diodore of Tarsus, *Fragm. In Gen.* 1,26. PG 33,1564CD (against those who attach the *imago* to the soul and the intelligence of the human being). Also, Theodoret of Cyrus, *Quest. In. Gen.*, 1,20. PG 80, 104Bf. The interpretations of the κατ' εἰκόνα by the Greek Fathers are so different that Epiphanius (*Adv. haer.* III,1,2-5. PG 42,341-346), after discussing several of them, concludes with the suggestion that we should not ask where in the human being the *imago* should be found; this is known only to God who has granted it to us.

[36] J.-M. Garrigues, *Maxime le Confesseur. La charité avenir divin de l'homme*, 1976, *passim* and p. 100f.

writings, the prevailing idea was a view of nature as accomplishing its desire of God through the divine *energeia*. The axis of his thought was the perfecting of the faculties of nature and the full participation of nature in the divine principle from which it has received its being.[37]

The second and more decisive period begins with the end of Maximus' monastic life due to the Persian invasions and his active involvement in the Christological controversies. It is at this period that, according to Garrigues, Maximus, while remaining faithful to the Dionysian idea of the dynamism of nature, was forced to give to the person at least an equally decisive role with that of nature in existence. Fragment 13 of the *Opuscula theologica et polemica* (PG 91, 145A-149D), which is probably the resumé of Maximus' Christological position which he defended before the Severian bishops of Crete (cf. PG 91, 49C),[38] demonstrates the organic link in his thought between Trinitarian and Christological ideas: three hypostases—one nature, two natures—one hypostasis. In faithfulness to Chalcedon, he declares that the Church teaches "the union according to the hypostasis because of the inseparability, and the difference according to nature because of the non-confusion....As in the case of the Holy Trinity there is an identity of essence and a heterogeneity of persons...in the same way in our Lord Jesus Christ there is an identity of person and a heterogeneity of natures."

Maximus' argument in this passage aims at showing that difference or otherness and unity constitute the quintessence of all ontology. At the same time, he makes a point worth noting: *in Christology the principle of unity is the person*. It is a Person that brings together into an unbreakable unity the natures, not the other way around. The person leads, the natures follow. A certain priority of the person over nature is an undeniable fact in Maximus' Christology.[39]

Now, in bringing together the natures into an unbreakable unity, the person (of the Logos) fully respects their integrity. It is at this point that Maximus, while remaining faithful to his original view of the dynamism of nature, develops his Christology *vis-à-vis* the Monotheletic and Monoenergetic position. Nature, whether divine or human, is marked with movement. And while in God's nature this movement

[37] J.-M. Garrigues, *Maxime le Confesseur*, p. 99.

[38] Cf. P. Sherwood, *St. Maximus*, p. 10.

[39] Cf. D. Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, p. 110f.

exhausts, so to say, itself in God Himself, in the human being it is directed towards God, its Creator, seeking its rest (στάσις) in Him.

It is on the basis of this idea of natural movement that Maximus develops his view of will (θέλησις, θέλημα). Since we are talking about an intelligent being, possessing body and rational soul in unity, will forms not a "psychological" but an *ontological* aspect of humanity: if you remove will from humanity, you have lost the human nature altogether, and in terms of Christology you have become a Monophysite.[40]

St Maximus' concern in insisting on human natural will in Christ was primarily to avoid the heresy of Monophysitism, not to speculate about human nature. To understand his position on natural will properly would require placing it in his Christology as a whole, i.e., not simply in relation to two natures, but also to the one Person. Christ cannot be divided between his nature and his Person. There is nothing natural in Him which is not at the same time personal—and *vice versa*.

This must be stressed in view of the tendency of certain theologians to treat natural will in Christ as something juxtaposed to Christ's Person. Arguing from Maximus' insistence on the natural character of human will, they proceed to statements such as "will belongs to the nature, *not to the person,*"[41] as if there could be will without a willing one, or as if the person would not make his natural will his own personal will. Maximus would remind these people that "θέλοντες λογιζόμεθα καὶ λογιζόμενοι θέλοντες βουλόμεθα" ("our thinking is grounded in our willing, just as our willing and deciding is grounded in our thinking"—*Pyr*, PG 91, 293B), and that will belongs to nature only as "*mere* (simple) willing" (ἁπλῶς θέλειν), not as the "how" of the will (πῶς θέλειν) which belongs to the person (*Pyr*. PG 91,292B-293A). The "how" of the will refers to the notion of will just as much as the "merely" (simply) willing.

The statement, "will belongs to nature, not to person" would bring us back to the dichotomy between nature and person and to the medieval conception of *natura pura*.[42] In the Greek Fathers there was no

[40] The interpretation of St Maximus' idea of will in terms of psychology (e.g., R.-A. Gauthier, "Saint Maxime le Confesseur et la psychologie de l'acte humaine," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 21 (1954) 150-163) obscures the ontological character of will in St Maximus' thought and can be misleading.

[41] Thus, for example, Larchet, *La divinization*, p. 129.

[42] On the history of this idea, see H. de Lubac, *Surnaturel. Etudes historiques*, 1946, chs V-VI.

room for such ideas in their thought.[43] The principle, "no person without nature, no nature without hypostases" must be born in mind when we deal with Christology—and patristic theology as a whole. As there is no anhypostatic nature, so there is no anhypostatic will either.

As we raise this point with regard to Christology, the question that comes up in our minds is this: do the natural wills in Christ will *as natures*? Can natures be willing? The Tome of St Leo seems to attribute to natures such a possibility of acting by themselves.[44] Maximus thinks differently. Here is the important text:

> The soul's powers...cannot move in an effective operation *without the assent* (or order: ἐπινεύσεως) *of the willing person* (τοῦ θέλοντος). And if it were granted *hypothetically* that they would will to operate by their own natural movement without the inclination (ροπὴ) of him who, so to say, possesses them, they would be unable to operate effectively anything at all of their impulse (ὁρμὴν), for the work does not at all follow from the power if it (the power) does not possess the inclination (or disposition, ροπὴν) contributing to it the actual purpose (τέλος) by operation, since in itself it is non-existent (with no hypostasis/person: ἀνυποστάτῳ)....For the willed [thing] does not follow at all from the will without the contributing of the subject in which they exist (ἐν ᾧ καὶ εἰσὶ). (*Amb*. PG 91, 1261CD)

Christ's human nature is not, therefore, αὐτοκίνητος, precisely because it is not αὐθυπόστατος, being inconceivable in itself (καθ' ἑαυτήν) but only in God the Logos from whom it received its being (τὸ εἶναι λαβοῦσα)(*Amb*. PG 91,1052AB). Natures, therefore, have a natural will but they do not thereby will; *it is the person that wills*. Without the person, the natural will is ἀνυπόστατον in the significantly double meaning of the word: *a-personal* and *non-existent*. The expression "the will belongs to nature, not to the person," employed by Larchet and others, can be very misleading.

If we return to Christology, the decisive moment in which the two natural wills of Christ appear and manifest themselves is without any doubt His prayer at Gethsemane before His passion. It was at that moment that the human will manifested its natural desire for life, while

[43] H.U. von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy* (Engl. trans. By B.E. Daley), 2003, p. 148.

[44] *Ep.* 28 *dogm ad Flav.* 2-4. Cf. G. Florovsky, *The Byzantine Fathers of the Fifth Century*. Collected Works, vol. VIII, 1987, p. 294.

the divine will moved and inclined towards the fulfillment of the will of the Father. Christ's words to His Father "not as I will but as You will" deify the human natural will making it follow the divine. This, however, should not be understood as a process of the wills willing and acting naturally, i.e., *qua* natures. The human will was deified because it was expressed and realized *by a divine Person*. This is why Maximus hastens to add:

> In the Lord what is natural does not precede what is freely willed, as happens with us; rather, just as He truly hungered and thirsted, but did not hunger and thirst in the same way [as we do] but in a way above what is human *because it was free*, so He also genuinely experienced fear of death, but a fear that was above the human. (*Pyr.* PG 91, 297D. Cf. *Opusc. theol., ibid.* 237AB)

Von Balthasar's comment on this passage[45] reveals its significance:

> His [Christ's] natural fear of death was itself supported by his underlying hypostatic freedom, which supported his whole nature. His hypostatic identity therefore bears and results in the natural opposition of the two natures, and in its supreme personal disponibility [to the Father's will] it dissolves the opposition between them to the same degree that it brings them into being.

The same Person, the Logos, brings the two natures into one unity in the Incarnation. The same Person brings the two natural wills in harmony at Gethsemane. In Christology, *it is the Person that has the first and last word—not the natures.*

The Anthropological Consequences

Maximus insists on the *natural* character of will because he is eager to safeguard two things: the dynamic character of nature as a whole and the universality of human freedom. Given the anthropology of his time, which he gets mainly from Nemesius, the distinctive quality of human beings as compared with the rest of material creation is that they possess a rational soul. Whereas the other material creatures can be described as vegetative (the plants) or sensitive (the animals), the human being belongs to a class that can be called "intellectual" (*Ep.* 7, PG 91, 436CD). This rationality which distinguishes humans from the rest of

[45] H. U. von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, p. 266.

material creatures (an idea that post-Darwinian anthropology would challenge strongly—but this is another matter) carries with it the quality of self-determination (αὐτεξούσιος κίνησις) which links the human creature with the Creator as His "image" (εἰκών). The human being is, therefore, free by nature, i.e., in a common universal way. The choice of the category of "nature" by Maximus as the soil of human freedom (and will) was due precisely to the intention on his part to stress that *no human being is exempt from freedom*. Only a universal abstract, such as "nature," could in St Maximus' mind express this universality. The association and grounding, therefore, of human will in human *nature* was not intended to say anything about nature's freedom as such. For St Maximus, unlike the Medieval scholastics, nature did not possess an ontology of its own. Left to itself it simply did not exist (ἀνυπόστατος). Chalcedonian Christology made this point firmly (albeit by creating a great deal of "anti-Chalcedonian" confusion and controversy): a nature, such as Christ's human nature, without a hypostasis at all would be absurd; only by its being enhypostaticized in the Person of the Logos could it make sense ontologically.[46]

Now, if human nature requires a hypostasis in order to be (being and existence are not separable, or even distinguishable in Greek patristic thought, as they came to be later in philosophy), it follows that outside Christ the natural will of the human being would require a hypostatic "mode" (a "πῶς"), in the words of St Maximus, so that it may not remain "ἁπλῶς θέλειν," i.e., an inexistent and inoperative will (*Pyr.* PG 91, 293B). It is at this point that the idea of γνώμη comes into the picture.

As Maximus himself admits (*Opusc. Th.* PG 90, 312B), there are many senses of the term γνώμη in Scripture and the Fathers (he notices 28). In his own definition, it is related to *mutability* (τροπή). If we follow Gregory of Nyssa (*Or. Catech.* 8, PG 45, 40A), all creatures by definition are mutable (τρεπτά) because they have had a beginning. This would mean that τροπὴ belongs to human *nature*. Does Maximus

[46] Cf. G. Florovsky's idea of "asymmetrical" Christology. *The Byzantine Fathers*, p. 297. The Chalcedonian rejection of a hypostasis for the human nature in Christ was the most serious problem that the Council created: can there be a nature without hypostasis? None was prepared to accept that. Only by enhypostasizing the human nature in the person of the Logos (see Leontius of Byzantium) could the *horos* of Chalcedon make sense. So crucial was it regarded then not to think of nature in itself, without thinking of the person at the same time.

share the same view? If he did, he would have to review his basic position that nature moves "naturally" only towards God—any other movement is παρὰ φύσιν. Sherwood suggests[47] that in this case we must distinguish between "nature" and its movement. Mutability, according to Maximus, relates to the movement of nature, not to nature itself.

Be that as it may, humans cannot exercise their natural will except through γνώμη[48]. "God alone is good by nature, only the imitator of God is good through conformity of γνώμη" (*Char.* 4, 90, PG 90, 1069C). Γνώμη played a decisive role in the fall of Adam by turning the natural will of the human being away from its natural object (God) and παρὰ φύσιν towards the human being itself (φιλαυτία) and the sensible creation. Thus, γνώμη came to be associated with sin and sinfulness (*Ep.* 6. PG 91,432B). And yet, γνώμη plays a decisive and indispensable role also for man's deification. This comes up clearly in *Amb.* 7, 10 (PG 91, 1076B and 1116 B): being and ever-being are the gifts of God, but the well-being (εὖ εἶναι) depends entirely on the exercise of γνώμη.

Hence γνώμη is not *necessarily* opposed to natural θέλησις; it is in fact described as "ποιὰ θέλησις, by which one adheres by habit to a good or to what is reckoned as such" (*Pyr.* PG 91, 308C). For this reason, it can be described also as ὄρεξις (a term used to indicate θέλησις), or "appetitive deliberation" (*Opusc. theol.* PG 91, 17C). Γνώμη is a sort of will (ποιά τις θέλησις) qualified and exercised by deliberation and disposition.

At this point, the crucial role of the person becomes evident. Γνώμη is not identical with the person; it is a quality added to the person when its nature (or the movement of it) is by its constitution mutable having had a beginning. In the case of Christ, γνώμη is not present, as His human nature is steadily fixed to the good. Therefore, as Sherwood[49] pertinently puts it, the natural will (self-determination) "is exercised according to the condition of the person in whom the nature attains its act and existence." The person, being itself the mode of nature's existence, provides the mode of exercise of the nature's will, thus being ontologically decisive not only for nature but also for the nature's θέλησις.

[47] P. Sherwood, *St Maximus*, p. 58.

[48] A. Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, 1996: *Gnomic* will "is the only way in which we can express our natural will," (p. 61).

[49] P. Sherwood, *St. Maximus*, p. 57.

The Monothelites began with the theosis of humans (saints) and ended with Christ: as there is only one will of God and the saints, so it follows that in Christ, too, the deified Man par excellence, there must be only one will. The Dyothelites (and Maximus) argued in the opposite direction. They started from Christ and moved to the saints and their deification. Human nature keeps its integrity in Christ, and so it will be also in the eschata when it is deified. The saints will then have one will with God, regarding their nature, but this one will will be exercised in different personal modes.[50] Personal difference will survive in the eschata and will "hypostasize" the one human nature according to the τρόπος "chosen" by γνώμη and προαίρεσις in this life by each person. As in the case of Christ, so it will also be with human beings: the person will determine our relation with our nature.

Conclusion: Nature, Person and Freedom

Maximus never raises a question about the relation between nature and freedom; he simply affirms that there is no necessity in the λόγος of nature (*Pyr.* PG 91, 293CD etc.). This question is a modern one, and as such it would be an anachronism to raise it in a Maximian context. Yet a systematic theologian cannot but raise it, thereby risking his reputation as a patristic scholar. It is, therefore, with a sense of relief for systematic theologians that we come across a renowned patristic scholar who dares to raise this question and discuss it, doing thereby what all theologians (patrologists as well as systematic theologians) ought to do, namely ask *what Maximus would have replied if he were asked a modern question*. I am referring to Polycarp Sherwood, whom I quote:

> But how can this *natural* and this *self-determinative* [his italics] be reconciled—the one implying necessity, the other freedom? So far as I understand Maximus, this question (which he nowhere raises) would have been for him no insoluble difficulty. His answer is to be found in the distinction of λόγος and τρόπος, which is coincident with that of nature and person. The will is free first in the nature; its freedom is exercised only by the person according to the concrete, actual conditions of its existence; the nature of man is essentially self-determinative, this power of self-determination may be realized in a strictly divine mode (the Incarnation) or in a variety of human

[50] Maximus, *Opusc. theol.* 1 PG 91,25A: "regarding the λόγος τῆς φύσεως, the will of all will be shown to be one; but regarding the τῆς κινήσεως τρόπῳ, it will differ."

> modes—in Adam, before the law, under the law, in the light of Revelation, in all the diversity of circumstances in which men may find themselves. It happens therefore that this fundamental desire which is by rights a desire for God is perverted to the creature; it may take a right direction but be misinformed and extrinsically deformed; it may reach full blossom in the Church.[51]

I have quoted this long citation because it summarizes what we have discussed in this paper and at the same time allows Maximus' teaching to relate to modern discussions about freedom. At a time when postmodernist tendencies threaten the validity of the very concept of nature and the human subject revolts against anything given, Maximus' connection of self-determination with human nature strikes us as being provocative, if not irrelevant. And yet Maximus does not turn a blind eye to the tragic situation in which human nature finds itself in its fallen state. He is not hesitant to speak of the *necessity* of nature and consequently of the need to free it: "the saints, through many sufferings, free the nature (τὴν φύσιν ἐλευθερώσαντες) that is in them from the condemnation of death on account of sin" (*Quest. Thal.* 61, PG 90, 637A. See also *Ep.* 9 PG 91,448C: "the purpose of the giver of the commandments is to *free* (ἐλευθερῶσαι) *man* from the world and *from nature.*")[52] Speaking of the necessity of nature in its present state in which nature exists under the yoke of death (*ibid.* 636ABC) is commonplace in Maximus. Following Adam's Fall, *all (created) nature* has become a slave to necessity, and without freedom (ἀναγκαίως καὶ μὴ βουλόμενοι) we come to existence and are subjected to the condemnation of death (*Quest. Thal.* 61, PG 90, 637Af.). If modern existentialist thought lays so much stress on the person's freedom from the given (and nature), Maximus does not come short of doing the same in referring to the *actual* state of nature.[53]

[51] P. Sherwood, *St. Maximus*, p. 81f.

[52] This leads St Maximus to the provocative advice which could expose him to the accusation by some of my critics of "manicheism" and "escaping from nature": "If you desire to be led by the Spirit of God ... *strip yourself off from* the world and *nature* (κόσμον καὶ φύσιν σαυτοῦ περιελε)" (*Ep.* 9 PG 91,448AB). The whole content of *Ep.* 9 shows how wrong it is to conceive of grace as an addition to or fulfillment of nature. What we have clearly in this letter of Maximus' is rather a *rupture* with nature (περιελε, περιτεμε, ἀποτέμνει) and an *ek-stasis* (ἐξίστησι) from both world and nature, the latter occupying a middle position (μέσον, μεσότης, μεθόριον) between God and the world.

[53] It will profit those who criticize me for taking a negative view of nature to read *QThal.* PG 90,632-636. Although holding so positive a view of nature, Maximus does not hesitate to speak of it in its present state in the most negative terms, describing it as existing in a state of necessity under the "tyranny" of death, owing to biological birth (ἡ καθ' ἡδονὴν ἐκ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ γένεσις *τυραννοῦσα* τὴν φύσιν, βορὰν τῷ δι' αὐτὴν θανάτῳ παρέπεμπε. 632D). Cf. 633C: "πάσης οὖν ἐκράτει *τῆς φύσεως δυναστεύων* (ὁ θάνατος)."

And yet, St Maximus is by no means an existentialist in this modern sense. Existentialism as a philosophy sprang form a tradition which, as we have already noted, had dichotomized being between nature and person. It was only inevitable for this philosophy to place the person over and against nature in relation to freedom. Besides, the only kind of nature that has been available to the experience of modern man after his rejection of Christ is nature in its actual (fallen) state. Maximus lived in a spiritual and intellectual milieu which approached nature and person as two aspects of the same reality, the one denoting unity, the other otherness and particularity. Faith in Christ confirmed this two-dimensional view of being by presenting Him as "embodying" it in the person of the Logos. The Person of Christ embraced and "assumed" nature; It neither escaped from it nor fought it; It did not, of course, turn a blind eye to the "necessity" to which nature has been subjected because of sin and death (thus taking seriously the modern existentialist concerns); rather It took over the wounds of this nature and made them His own in order to heal them by love.

Thus, one does not have to be an existentialist in order to give priority to the person over nature. The mystery of Christ as defined by the Council of Chalcedon and as presented by St Maximus declares the faith: one *Person*, one of the Trinity, took freely the initiative, following the good pleasure of another *Person* (the Father) and with the co-operation of another *Person* (the Spirit) to assume and hypostasize in His own *Person* the human nature in its state wounded by sin and death, respecting fully its integrity and dynamism, transmitting to it the qualities of His own nature, healing it by His own death, and elevating it to the level of participation in the divine life. In this faith, there is not the slightest conflict between nature and person. On the contrary, there is full and perfect harmony between them. And there is nothing more relevant than this for the existential needs of the human being in every age and place. In Christ it has been shown that freedom is not freedom *from* (nature and the Other) but freedom *for*. It is identical to *love*.

Epilogue

Theological personalism, as expounded in the various writings of the present author, has been met with criticism, mainly on the ground of the question of its faithfulness to patristic thought. Some of this criticism is based on gross and, perhaps, deliberate distortion of my views[54]. This makes any response meaningless. Constructive criticism is always welcome, as it can stimulate further clarifications and even reconsideration of one's position.

In the present paper I have used the theology of St Maximus as a criterion for theological personalism in general and my own work in particular on this subject. To some readers it may appear that in this article I have shifted from my previous position. I would be fully prepared to admit that, provided that certain clarifications be made.

The first clarification concerns the alleged dichotomy between nature and person and the conflict between these two in my work. In this paper, I have insisted that according to St Maximus (and the Greek Fathers in general) nature and person form an unbreakable ontological unity, as they represent two aspects of every being, divine or human. This is a view I have always maintained and stated already in my *Being as Communion* many years ago.[55] As I made it clear in the present paper, the dichotomy between nature and person is to be found in Medieval thought and does not express the Greek patristic tradition. As to the conflict between nature and person, this arises only when nature is experienced as *necessity*, which applies only to the actual (fallen) state of existence. To transfer this to God or to creation as such would amount to a misrepresentation of my thought.[56]

[54] Such distortions of my thought are uncovered and criticized by Alexis Torrance in his article: "Personhood and Patristics in Orthodox Theology: Reassessing the debate," *The Heythrop Journal*, 52 (2011) 700-707. See also, D. Bissias, "Loudovikos on Communion and Otherness by John Zizioulas: Dictated Error," *http:/bissias.blogspot.com/2010/12*. On the basis of such distortions, I am accused of no less than six heresies: Manichaeism, Arianism, Monotheletism, Monophysitism, Neoplatonism, and Docetism, plus, for good measure, an interminable narcissism! This, obviously, is far from being a model of unbiased, constructive, and academically honest criticism.

[55] *Being as Communion*, 1985, p. 41f. (n. 37).

[56] For a transfer of my negative statements about nature in its present state to creation as such, see D. Farrow, "Person and Nature. The Necessity-Freedom Dialectic in John Zizioulas," D.H. Knight (ed.), *The Theology of John Zizioulas*, 2007, p. 122. Nothing in my writings referred to by Farrow suggests a "conflation" between creation and fall or that "the fall is somehow implicit in creation." The point I make in these writings is that the fall has prevented creation from overcoming the limitations inherent in creaturehood (corruptibility, mortality, etc.). It does not follow from this that the fall was "implicit" in creation. As to Farrow's suggestion that it is *sin* that is the ultimate threat (p. 123), this is probably the real issue behind our disagreement. For the Greek patristic tradition, the real threat was not sin but mortality due to createdness. (See e.g. Athanasius, *de inc.* 4 and 7: the problem with the fall was not sin—this would have been solved by repentance and forgiveness—but the "subjection of the human beings to the corruptibility *due to their nature* (κατὰ φύσιν φθορά)," i.e., to *creaturehood*, since "the human being is *by nature* (κατὰ φύσιν) mortal having come out of nothing (=creaturehood)"). Maximus adopts the same view (*Amb.* PG 91,1308CD).

As to the application of necessity to God's nature, all statements in my writings which speak of "necessity" in divine nature presuppose the *hypothesis* that divine nature is conceived apart from or prior to divine personhood: in such a case (which in fact does *not* apply to God since in God nature and person are inseparably united as two aspects of His being) *our* references to divine nature would make God a "necessary being" and God's nature a necessity for God. In other words, a personless nature in God (or in humans), or a nature which has—in our statements about it—the priority over the person, is subjected to necessity. It is in this sense and in such a context that it can be said that the person "frees nature from necessity." The real point, therefore, in speaking about necessity and freedom is not that nature=necessity, and person=freedom (which is, more or less, how my position is presented), but that nature and person must be spoken of together, for otherwise nature is subjected to necessity (which does *not* form part of its definition). The whole point in this paper has been to affirm, with St Maximus, that nature may be endowed with freedom and will, but it is the person that makes this freedom and will *exist*; otherwise it remains ἀνυπόστατος (a-personal=non-existent). It is in the same spirit that we must understand also my references to divine nature and personhood. The problem is, therefore, in the final analysis, that those who refer to patristic statements about freedom as "a characteristic of nature" take nature as a concept *in itself* (a Medieval tendency) and forget that in the Greek Fathers all natural characteristics (including will and freedom)—and nature itself—remain non-existent without the person who "enhypostasizes" them. Thus, in conclusion, nature is not free (willing, self-determinative, etc.) unless it is hypostasized. In this sense it can be said that the person makes nature free.

All the negative characteristics of nature in my work presuppose an understanding of nature as a concept having priority and predominance over the person. Such is the case with classical Greek thought, to some extent with trends in Western theology and philosophy, and, existentially speaking, with our actual experience of nature, as it involves individualization and death. Some would interpret this as "existential influence," while others would go as far as to see in it an "escape" from nature, or an "undermining" of it! In order to "defend" nature from such a "dangerous" position these critics would invoke the positive references to nature by the Greek Fathers, St Maximus in particular. But in so doing they overlook the fact that these Fathers refer positively to nature either as a universal concept or as a normative state (κατὰ φύσιν) as it was intended and willed by God (λόγος φύσεως). Whenever these

Fathers refer to the state of nature under the threat or the yoke of death they are far more negative than I am in their references (Thus, e.g., Athanasius[57] and Maximus above).

Therefore, "freedom from nature" means, in my writings, not to subject the particular to the universal by giving priority to substance over hypostasis in ontology, and at the level of experience (so called "existential") to seek redemption from the present (fallen) state of existence in which nature is imposed on us as a necessity (ἀναγκαίως, in the words of St Maximus), particularly through individualism (in both its ontological and its moral sense) and death. This redemption is offered by Christ and constitutes the object of *asceticism* (which, strangely enough, is regarded by some critics as missing in my writings!). Asceticism in St Maximus' thought is not so much the Evagrian contemplative type which would be based on the λόγοι of creation; its aim is rather, as Sherwood observes, to combat individualism (φιλαυτία) and reach *love*.[58] This is not entirely unrelated to nature. As we have seen in this article, contrary to what certain scholars believe, Maximus distinguishes between person and ἄτομον, associating the latter with the concept of nature as a category arrived at by a process of *division*. This is an observation he makes with regard to Christology but, given that Christ is the perfect and ideal human being, it must be applied also to anthropology.

The view, therefore, that the concept of the individual does not relate to self-love, division, lack of communion, etc., in the Fathers[59] is far from being correct. Maximus, as we have seen, relates ἄτομον—not πρόσωπον—to nature as the outcome of a process of division, and, although he does not say that explicitly, he thereby points to the relation between nature and individuality also at the existential level. The task of a systematic theologian who tries to be faithful to patristic thought is precisely to make explicit what is implicit in the expressions of the Fathers[60] (this is where he is different from the historian who must limit himself to what is explicitly said by the Fathers).[61]

[57] See note 56 above.

[58] P. Sherwood, *St Maximus the Confessor*, pp. 81-99: "Maximus perhaps best of all indicates what is most proper to his thought: the insistence on *gnome* and on love" (p. 99).

[59] Larchet, *Personne et nature*, pp. 237ff. (esp. 292).

[60] This is no easy task; it requires faithfulness to the words of the Fathers combined with openness to questions which the Fathers had not raised in their time.

[61] Yet, the work of the historian, too, is not conceivable without *hermeneutics*. "Pure" history, without the intervention of the historian's horizon of thought is impossible, as is pointed out by H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2006: "understanding (the past) is not merely a reproductive but always a productive activity as well" (p. 296).

Another issue that has come up in the present article and relates to criticisms occasionally expressed concerning my views on personalism is that of the "priority" of the person in relation to nature in ontology. Nature and person are linked up together in ontology as the general (universal) to the particular, or the "one" to the "other" (or "the many"): there is no nature without person, and vice-versa. And there is no conflict between these two, except, as we have seen, in the fallen state of existence. Nature and person form two inseparable aspects of being. Yet—and I have insisted on that in my writings—there is a dynamic, a movement, in being, a sort of "causation." Nature and person do not co-exist statically and "symmetrically," neither in God nor in creation. The priority of nature has been the characteristic of classical Greek thought: everything springs from nature or substance, either as ὑπερκειμένη (Platonism) or ὑποκειμένη (Aristotelianism). Western theology has on the whole avoided assigning the role of "cause" either to nature or to person. The Greek Fathers (beginning with the Cappadocians and followed by Photius and later Byzantine theologians) have assigned the role of "cause" to the person of the Father in divine being, extending it also to anthropology.[62] My promotion of this idea has provoked the most negative reactions, not so much from the side of historians (no one can deny that the Cappadocians spoke of personal causation in God), but from that of systematic theologians who for various reasons (mainly sociological concerns) dislike ideas implying hierarchy.

Maximus does not have to say much on this issue with regard to the being of God. It is in his Christology that we can find an answer to the question of priority with regard to nature and person. Our discussion in the present article has shown tha,t although the concept of nature plays a fundamental role in Maximus' Christology, it is the person that "causes" nature *not only to act but also to be*, to exist. Human nature is dynamic; will is characteristic of nature precisely because nature is associated with motion.[63] But human nature is not αὐτοκίνητος; it is

[62] E.g. Basil, *Ep.* 361 and 362, PG 32,1101-1104: human beings derive their being not from a common substance (κοινὴ ὕλη) but from the person of Adam who is their ἀρχή and ὑπόθεσις (=the cause). This patristic evidence is overlooked by Larchet (*Personne et nature*, p. 343f) in his passionate attack on my position.

[63] Cf. P. Sherwood, *St Maximus the Confessor*, p. 55f.

moved by the Person of the Logos[64]; the person causes it to act (ἐνεργεῖν). This is so because it is *the same Person that causes it to be*: Christ's human nature "came into being for (or because of) the Logos" (*Ep.* 15, PG 91,560C).[65] Causation is present also in Christology, and it is related not to nature but to the person. In the *horos* of the Council of Chalcedon, which St Maximus follows faithfully, the subject throughout the confession of the mystery of Christ is a *Person* (the Logos); nature follows and is adjusted to the initiative of the person.

The allergy to personalism in theology, displayed by certain authors, can hardly be justified by the study of St Maximus. As one of the best exponents of St Maximus' thought, the late Father D. Staniloae, has put it,[66] everything in Maximus' Christology centers on the person: divine and human freedom met and achieved perfect unity "in the hypostasis" of the Logos, and in this way "the human being was lifted above the determinism of nature or accepted this determinism freely."[67] Christ, writes Staniloae, "deified nature because he deified in a real manner its will, and, again, he deified the will (of nature) because the Hypostasis, which willed in the human will, was the Logos of God." It is in and through the person that the nature is deified.

[64] See above.

[65] The view expressed by certain authors (e.g., M. Doucet, *Dispute de Maxime le Confesseur avec Pyrrhus*, 1972, p. 209-211, followed by Larchet, *Divinisation*, p. 370f.) that Maximus taught the assumption by Christ of a "common" or "catholic" human nature to which He gave "particular characteristics" by His hypostasis, appears to be problematic. Such a view would somehow presuppose the "existence" of a common human nature "before" its assumption by the Logos ("préalablement à cette assumption," in the words of Larchet). This view brings us back to the Medieval debate between realists and nominalists with the implication that St Maximus was a "realist" with regard to the idea of nature, since he is presented as advocating the existence of a common nature "before" ("préalablement") its hypostasization by the Logos. But Maximus was neither a "realist" nor a "nominalist." He was not a realist because he did not conceive of a catholic nature as existing at all prior ("préalablement") to its assumption by the Person of the Logos. And he was not a nominalist either (at least of the main stream of Medieval nominalists, such as Occam, etc.) because he believed that human nature having come to existence in and through its assumption by the person of the Logos ("τοῦ εἶναι λαβοῦσα τὴν γένεσιν". *Ep.* 15. PG 91,560C) was a *real* catholic human nature and did not remain a "concept" in the mental world of notions, as a nominalist would be inclined to think. When St Maximus writes that the Logos gave to His human flesh its very being (τὸ εἶναι λαβοῦσα), he clearly implies that in the Incarnation there was no such thing "available" for assumption as a "common" nature which was to be "particularized" by the hypostasis of the Logos. A non-particularized nature is ἀνυπόστατος and therefore fictitious; it simply does not exist (ἀνύπαρκτον), according to St Maximus.

[66] See D. Staniloae, "Introduction," *The Mystagogia of Saint Maximus the Confessor* (ed. By Apostolike Diakonia of the Church of Greece), 1973, pp. 54-62 (in Greek).

[67] Note that Staniloae speaks of "determinism" in human nature.

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All references to nature and person in my writings have to be understood in the light of the above clarifications. Any negative statements about nature apply to ontology only when a disjunction or conflict between nature and person occurs either at the level of thought (e.g., in classical Greek philosophy, especially in ancient Greek tragedy, or in later Medieval and modern philosophy) or in the experience of our actual (fallen) existence. Both protologically and eschatologically, nature and person-hypostasis "co-exist" harmoniously as two aspects of every being. At this level, there is nothing negative about either of these two in my thought.[68] Yet—and this continues to be my position, supported, in my view, by the study of St Maximus—this harmonious "co-existence" involves a dynamic and a movement of nature which is not αὐτοκίνητος; *it is due not to nature but to the person*. This is true not only about Christology but also about God's Trinitarian existence[69]

[68] The criticism of my alleged undermining of nature derives from a confusion of the Greek patristic concept of nature (which is what I discuss in my writings) with the Medieval and later idea of *natura pura* which has led historically to an objectification of nature as a *res*, conceivable in itself (as the material or the biological "nature") and often in opposition to or contrast with the person. The concept of person I discuss in my writings has nothing to do with such an opposition or contrast. The conflict between person and nature in our actual (fallen) existence to which I often refer, and which apparently has given rise to the above criticism, should not be understood as implying an ontological dichotomy (a contrast between two "objects": person and nature), but as a "disturbance" and "upset" in the harmonious "co-existence" of the fundamental *aspects* or *dimensions* of being, its λόγος and its τρόπος. This conflict is exactly what St Maximus describes as the state in which "*nature revolts against itself according to γνώμη*" (τὴν φύσιν κατὰ τὴν γνώμην πρὸς ἑαυτὴν στασιάζουσαν)" *Exp. orat. dom.* PG 90,901C. My references to our "biological existence" in our actual (fallen) state are meant to describe exactly this Maximian idea and not to indicate an opposition to nature. (Alexis Torrance's suggestions in his article (p. 703)—see n. 54 above—about a possible interpretation of my position on person and nature in the spirit of the Pauline concept of σαρκικός-ψυχικός-πνευματικός deserve positive consideration. Note, for example, how St Maximus defines ψυχικὸν ἄνθρωπον in *Ep.* 9 (PG 91,448D): "The word of Scripture has, in my view, called ψυχικὸν the *natural man* (φυσικὸν ἄνθρωπον)" because nature is considered in its characteristic (ἰδιότης) of "birth and corruption (γένεσιν καὶ φθοράν)." This definition of ψυχικός by St Maximus fits exactly my own analysis of the "biological hypostasis" in *Being as Communion*).

[69] This is exactly what we mean by expressions such as the following: "God as person—as the hypostasis of the Father—makes the one divine substance to be that what it is: the one God"; "the ontological 'principle' or 'cause' of being—i.e. that which makes a thing to exist—is not the substance or nature but the *person* or hypostasis." *Being as Communion*, p. 41 (and n. 37)f. The same ontological principle that we find operating in St Maximus' Christology lies behind the above statements concerning Trinitarian theology. There is no "shifting" from this principle in the present paper, only a clarification of it with the help of St Maximus' Christology.

and about humanity,[70] even about the cosmos.[71] It is the person that "hypostasizes" (or gives existence to) nature in all these cases. Theological personalism is meant to affirm, not to diminish, the dynamism of nature, not, however, by allowing nature to be "self-existent" (Maximus, as we have seen, rejects the philosophers' definition of substance as the "self-existent") and self-moving but by making the person move and raise nature *above nature* (ὑπὲρ φύσιν),[72] i.e., by *liberating* it from the vi-

[70] Except for the fallen state of its existence in which, as we have noted, the person is subjected to the necessity of nature, each one of us coming to being by and through the laws of nature (including corruptibility, mortality, individualism, etc.). *Being as Communion*, pp. 49ff. and *Communion and Otherness*, pp. 55f. It must be noted and underlined however that, unlike the position of existentialist thought, this fallen state of human existence is not what defines the human being either protologically or eschatologically. In both of these states of human existence, it is the Christological model that defines humanity: *nature and person co-exist harmoniously as two inseparable aspects of being, but it is the person that hypostasizes nature and directs its movement towards its end.* The Aristotelian (and Thomist) view that the principle of becoming must be sought in nature is qualified in the thought of St Maximus by the crucial role played by the person in teleology.

[71] Cf. A. Nesteruk, *The Universe as Communion*, 2008, *passim*, and pp. 235f. Also my "Relational Ontology: Insights from Patristic Thought" in J. Polkinghorne (ed.). *The Trinity and an Entangled World. Relationality in Physical Science and Theology*, 2010, pp. 146-156.

[72] The idea of ὑπὲρ φύσιν is placed in Christological perspective by St Maximus. Nature is endowed with a movement towards God, but it cannot by itself reach its τέλος, God. Maximus is clear about that: there is no power in nature that can be capable of receiving deification (Οὐ γὰρ ἔχομεν δεκτικὴν φύσει τῆς θεώσεως δύναμιν. *Quest. Thal.* PG 90,324A). A person divinized by nature would be God by nature (*Amb.* PG 91,1237D). More than that, "*nature is incapable of conceiving what lies above nature*" (*Quest. Thal.* PG 90, 321A). Theosis is, therefore, above nature (ὑπὲρ φύσιν) and is a *gift* (χάρις). The concepts of ὑπὲρ φύσιν and of χάρις coincide. Χάρις and φύσις do not mingle with each other ("οὐδαμῶς ἀλλήλοις συμφυρέντων τῶν ἐν φύσει καὶ χάριτι λόγων" *Quest. Thal.* PG 90,385A). But, it must be emphasized, grace or the supernatural, coincide in St Maximus' thought above all *in the event of the Incarnation* (*Quest. Thal.* PG 90,725B-728A. Cf. PG 90,400AB; 401A; *Amb.* PG 91,1313D etc.) *and our theosis in the eschata* which, according to the ancient scholiast of St Maximus, deifies our nature "*according to the person*" (κατὰ τὴν ὑπόστασιν) "leaving it human according to its nature (κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν)" (*Quest. Thal.* PG 90,321C). The grace of God (and the ὑπὲρ φύσιν) is to be found in its highest form in the assumption of the human nature by the Person of the Logos. The *Person of Christ* is the bearer of grace *par excellence* (cf. the comment of the ancient scholiast in *Quest. Thal.* PG 90,729C: "That our Lord and God is χάρις see ... [the expression] *full of grace and truth*"). The location of χάρις in the natures and not in the Person of Christ would amount, once more, to a disjunction between nature and person and would contradict the principle that it is the person that hypostasizes and moves the nature. It is, therefore, a mistake to speak of grace *versus* (or *instead of*) person. Suffice it to recall the Pauline expression: "*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* and the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit" (II Cor. 13:13). It is not accidental that St Paul attaches grace to the Person of Christ, and not to the other Persons of the Holy Trinity. It is the Person of Christ that is the bearer of grace *par excellence.*

cious circle of the tautology of self-existence to which a certain type of philosophy has condemned it. Nature is, indeed, endowed with movement, will, etc., but it is the person that makes this movement and will move towards the fulfillment of its purpose (τέλος, σκοπός), which is the liberation from self-existence to an existence *for the other and as other.*

This personalism is a fundamental lesson from Christology which St Maximus, more than anyone else, has taught us. It is a confirmation of the personalism which the Cappadocian Fathers applied to Trinitarian theology.

St Maximus' Concept of a Human Hypostasis

Torstein Theodor Tollefsen

How should we define St Maximus' concept of a human person?[1] To put the question this way, however, is ambiguous. The term person may have quite different connotations in modern contexts and in a church Father of the seventh century. On the one hand, we have the differences in terminology; on the other hand, there are the differences in theological and philosophical context and challenges. In late antique Christian thinking, πρόσωπον and ὑπόστασις, words we translate as person and hypostasis, usually mean the same. Certain modern approaches, inspired by personalism, have stressed the importance of person and hypostasis and shed a light of suspicion on concepts of essence and nature.[2] There is urgent need of clarification here, since it should be obvious for a student of Maximus' thought that terms like essence, nature, activity, hypostasis, and person are all necessary and basic for his whole theological and philosophical project. What I try to identify in this paper is Maximus' *concept* of a human person or hypostasis, and examine how he relates this concept to essence, nature, and, as we shall see, activity. If Maximus gives any priority to the hypostasis at the cost of essence, one has to gather from his own texts how and why he does so. His concept of hypostasis should be documented without any modern biases.

[1] I want to thank my friend Ronald Worley of his assistance with the English language (all mistakes are my responsibility) and my retired colleague professor Jon Wetlesen for constructive critique and valuable comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

[2] Cf. here Zizioulas (1985), 27-49. There are a lot of interesting and challenging points in Zizioulas' approach, even when I disagree with him, but I do not think it is possible to claim the fathers as primary sources for his concept of person.

Maximus pays a lot of attention to ontological categories for the simple reason that a consistent ontology is for him theologically urgent.[3]

We start with considering some key terms. There are (at least) four Greek terms that could be applied when speaking of a single entity existing within time and space coordinates, viz. τὸ ἄτομον, τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον, πρόσωπον, and ὑπόστασις. (i) In philosophical usage τὸ ἄτομον typically identifies the last item in a "division" of being, the last item in a Porphyrian tree. While genera and species are divisible, the one into species, the other into "individuals," individuals cannot be further subdivided without being destroyed physically. Animals may be divided into species like horse and man, and man may be subdivided into Peter and Paul. Paul, however, cannot be subdivided. To be Paul means to be an ontologically indivisible entity. (ii) The next term, the τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον, is opposed to τὸ καθόλου. They are the extremes in a system of classification, like in the Porphyrian tree. That which concerns the whole or the universal (τὸ καθόλου) may be subdivided into genera and species from the highest level of generality down to the least general concepts, viz. the species. The species contain that which concerns each or the particular (τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον).

A section from Maximus' *Ambiguum* 10 illustrates this point. He describes how οὐσία itself is distributed ("moved") by the divine activity of expansion and contraction. This distribution establishes the cosmos as a system in which beings are interconnected in an orderly way.[4] The system itself, its interconnectedness and internal dynamics, is based on the principles of *logoi* and *tropoi* that secure the particular beings in their essential identity and provide for the possibilities of activities and developments. Maximus says that the orderly system of the cosmos reaches its limit "below" in the forms (τὰ εἴδη) or in "the most specific forms" (τῶν εἰδικωτάτων εἰδῶν). What does this mean?

The term "most specific εἴδη" is used by Porphyry and is treated at length by Barnes.[5] It means the last species under which particulars are grouped.[6] We shall not dive into prolonged discussions on the Porphyrian doctrine or on the sources of Maximus' logic.[7] However, I am not sure that the τὸ εἰδικώτατον of Maximus is a species in the Porphyrian sense. One now and then gets the impression that scholars consider οὐσία or essence in Maximus to be purely universal.[8] Prestige indicates this, but even so there seems to be a certain tension in his exposition. He says "Maximus equates *ousia* with species (*eidos*), distinguishing it from hypostasis by saying that the latter denotes a particular instance embodying the *ousia* or *eidos*."[9] One may already feel the tension between *ousia* as universal and *ousia* as form and the essence of the particular being in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* book 7.[10] Aristotle seems to me to have two ideas in mind. On the one hand, the question of being leads him to identify οὐσία as the εἶδος which is the constitutive ontological principle answering the question of what it means for an entity to be. On the other hand, this quest for what it means to be is in his mind not separated from the notion of the intelligibility of entities. Such intelligibility, of course, is connected with the notion of universality. Even if this duality entails many problems and is at the core of prolonged controversies in Western philosophy, it is neither unreasonable nor uninteresting. I believe a similar tension is present in Maximus' thought. I shall try to substantiate my claim since it is relevant for the topic of the hypostasis.

Before we return to the Maximian passage just considered,[11] we shall have a look at another section of the *Ambiguum* 10 where Maximus definitely considers the universal, with which he obviously thinks of the essence generically and specifically, as an abstraction.[12] The context is a contemplation of divine providence. Maximus says that God, despite what some pagan philosophers might think, executes His providence over universals as well as over particulars.[13] Then he continues to say that

[3] We shall have to avoid entering into the diverse theological contexts where these conceptual tools are applied, since there is material there for a whole book and probably more.

[4] *Amb.* 10, PG 91: 1177b-c.

[5] Porphyry transl. Barnes (2008).

[6] Porphyry, *Isagoge*, CAG IV, 1, 4-5, translated in Porphyry transl. Barnes (2008), 6.

[7] Even though this is definitely a subject that needs careful investigation.

[8] This is an old view, represented by for instance Prestige (1952), 278-9.

[9] Ibid.

[10] The interpretation of *ousia* in the *Metaphysics* 7 is a matter of controversy. One could, for instance, consider the books by Witt (1989) and Politis (2005), which also refer to other relevant literature. However, after having gone carefully through Aristotle's text with students in a recent seminar, I consider the above interpretation as sufficiently reasonable.

[11] *Amb.* 10, PG 91: 1177b-c.

[12] *Amb.* 10, PG 91: 1189b-1192a, cf. *Amb.* 41, PG 91: 1312b-d.

[13] For ancient discussions on providence, cf. Sorabji (2004b), 79-110. Some pagans thought that God's providence did not extend to individuals since God does not know individuals. That would be beneath His dignity. To this cf. Maximus *Amb.* 7, PG 91: 1085a-c.

universals consist of particulars and that if the particular examples of any *logos* should perish, then the universals will not continue to be: "For the parts exist and subsist in the wholes, and the wholes in the parts" (τὰ μέρη γὰρ ἐν ταῖς ὁλότησι, καὶ αἱ ὁλότητες ἐν τοῖς μέρεσι καὶ εἰσὶ καὶ ὑφεστήκασι). It is not immediately clear how this is to be understood. First we should notice that the *logos* cannot be destroyed, since all *logoi* are God's own thoughts and acts of will that define and institute beings through the act of creation.[14] Secondly, the universals spoken of in this context must be universal *abstractions* made by the human mind, for if the particulars should perish, then these universals could probably be held to be abolished.[15] However this is to be understood, we shall try to draw a few conclusions from the material just considered.

I started this whole sequence by attempting to define the term particular (τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον), which should be conceived in opposition to the notion of the universal (τὸ καθόλου). It seems obvious that Maximus thinks (i) that essential features of a generic and a specific kind are abstractions made by the human mind. However, the mind makes its abstractions from particulars made by God in accordance with His *logoi* as acts of will. (ii) This leads us to a second conclusion: the primary object of the creative act is the making of particular beings. God makes particulars, and because they exist we are able to abstract species and genera. *Particulars, therefore, are ontologically basic.* (iii) There is, however, a third point to be made: Maximus is not a nominalist. Even if particulars are ontologically basic, the specific and generic interconnections between beings are not empty abstractions. The *logoi* of the natures secure both the ontological identity of the particulars and the ontological bonds between them.[16] It even seems obvious that ontological differentiation and identification on the basic level of the particulars, including the identity of particulars within their species, is secured by the internal ontological structure of the particulars themselves.[17]

[14] Cf. *Amb.* 7, PG 91: 1077c-1080a and 1085a-c.

[15] I am not completely convinced that Maximus is right on this. Even if the mammoth is extinct it should be possible to have a universal concept of the essence of it. On the other hand, there would not any longer be any particular instances within the universal concept of "mammothhood." Could the universal be considered to be *empty* in that regard? What exactly does Maximus mean when he indicates that universals are abolished?

[16] Cf. *Amb.* 7, PG 91: 1077c-1080b, and *Ambiguum* 10, 1189a.

[17] It seems to me that a careful philosophical study of Maximus' doctrine of essence, universal, and particular is urgently needed.

This brings us back to the text from *Ambiguum* 10 where Maximus writes about the τὸ εἰδικώτατον. Could we now see the contours of two basic senses of the term "essence" as used by Maximus?

(a) The one sense is "essence as universal," something that is confirmed also by what he says in *Opusculum* 14, viz. that essence and nature are the same, both being common and universal, predicated on many and numerically different things and never circumscribing one person (πρόσωπον).[18] We may say, for instance, that Peter, John, and Paul are human beings, and "human being" is a universal that may be defined as "rational animal." We may say quite generally that the patristic doctrine of human nature emphasizes the properties of being an animal with intellect, reason, and will as essentially human. These are necessary and sufficient conditions for an entity to be a human being. They are necessary but, as we shall see below, probably not sufficient to be a human hypostasis. The identification of man as an animal is important in more than one respect. On the one hand, it means that man is an animated *bodily* being; on the other hand, it means that man is somehow *interconnected* with other living things. We shall return to the last point below.

(b) The second sense of "essence" leads us to the τὸ εἰδικώτατον. The orderly distribution of essence that we found above in *Ambiguum* 10 (1177b-c) reaches its limit in the "most specific forms." My hypothesis is that these are particular instances of the species, e.g., concretely existing human beings like Peter and Paul. The reason is that it is very difficult to believe that Maximus would describe the culmination of the orderly arrangement of the cosmos as if it terminated in anything else.[19] If this holds true, then I believe a definition of essence found in *Opusculum* 23 could be introduced to highlight this interpretation:[20] "On the one hand, essence shows the form itself and the nature, i.e., the very thing which exists by itself, while the hypostasis indicates a 'someone' of the essence" (ὅτι οὐσία μὲν αὐτὸ τὸ εἶδος καὶ τὴν φύσιν, ὅπερ ἐστι καθ' ἑαυτὴν, δηλοῖ, ὑπόστασις δὲ, τόν τινα τῆς οὐσίας ἐμφαίνει). This whole sentence witnesses to the notion, deplored by Prestige above, of the es-

[18] *Opusc.* 14, PG 91: 149b.

[19] Cf. the comments on *Amb.* 10, PG 91: 1189b-1192a above.

[20] *Opusc.* 23, PG 91: 260d-261a.

sence as individually instantiated.[21] However, this essence is not abstract since it is the essence of a particular being. Nor is it as such a universal since it is the form or nature of an existing "something." This raises philosophical challenges which we shall not address in this context.[22] However, it brings us directly to the topic of the present paper which we shall turn to now.

We have reached the notion of a particular being that is an individual. Is this an hypostasis as well? Maximus' concept of hypostasis cannot be properly understood without relating it to other concepts, such as essence and nature (οὐσία, φύσις), potency and activity (δύναμις, ἐνέργεια).[23] I believe that essence in the second sense suggested above, as a concretely existing way of being, is found in a very important Maximian text in *Chapters on Knowledge* (1, 1-10) in which he reflects on the triad *ousia-dynamis-energeia*. It seems quite clear that essence in this text is, to quote from *Opusculum* 23, "the form itself and the nature, i.e., the very thing which exists by itself."[24] If this is correct, then we have a meaning of essence that comes close to one of the Aristotelian senses of the term *ousia*. In Aristotle's philosophy, *ousia* means several things, and it is quite difficult to figure out how these senses fit together into one interdependent and unified family tree. Fortunately, that need not concern us now. What is interesting here is that, according to Aristotle, *ousia* in *one* primary sense is the form and the particular nature of a concretely existing individual being.[25] It is precisely this particular form and nature that makes it possible, when one experiences several particulars, to abstract the universal essence of such particulars.[26] How-

[21] This interpretation agrees with the results of Törönen (2007), 52-55: "For Maximus, then, the individual instances of 'all the created beings that are considered in species (εἶδος) and in genus (γένος)' are hypostases or persons."

[22] Cf. note 10 above.

[23] The terms δύναμις and ἐνέργεια may be translated in several ways, possibly connoting slightly different conceptions. The first term may be translated power, potency, and potentiality, the second as activity, actuality, and act.

[24] *Opusc.* 23, PG 91: 260d-261a.

[25] Cf. *Metaphysics*, book 7, chapter 7 (1032b1-2): εἶδος δὲ λέγω τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι ἑκάστου καὶ τὴν πρώτην οὐσίαν; cf. *De anima*, book 2, chapter 1. This ontological primacy of form should be distinguished from the logical primacy of particular entities ("primary substance") in the *Categories*.

[26] Essence in the primary sense indicated here is the particular thing's particular essence that is its form. Essence in the secondary sense is always the common essence of numerically different particular things, and this common essence has an epistemic status since it is abstracted from the particulars.

ever, in the *Chapters on Knowledge* Maximus does not consider essence in the abstract sense. According to the *Chapters of Knowledge*, a creature, probably meaning a particular being, is essentially constituted (οὐσία) with a delimited potentiality (or power, δύναμις) that may issue in concrete activities (ἐνέργειαι). With these distinctions in mind, we may now turn to Maximus' conceptions of the human hypostasis.[27]

In the first place, we shall return to *Opusculum* 23: "On the one hand, essence is the form itself and the nature, i.e., the very thing which exists by itself, while the hypostasis indicates a 'someone' of the essence (τόν τινα τῆς οὐσίας)." One is probably justified to say here that the hypostasis is that person, that "someone," who carries the form or the essence in the concrete sense. Further on, in the same *Opusculum*, he says:

> For hypostasis is in all ways nature as well, like figure too is in all ways body. For hypostasis is not to be known without nature, and neither are figure or colour to be known without body. But nature is not in all ways hypostasis as well. For nature has the *logos* of being that is common, while hypostasis in addition has the *logos* of being that belongs to itself. The nature, then, has only the *logos* of the species, while the hypostasis is such that it in addition shows a someone (τοῦ τινός).[28]

Here we have now found two instances of the indefinite pronoun τις, meaning "someone," indicating a hypostasis, not an essence. We may consider the analogy he makes and see if it sheds any light on the topic: σχῆμα, which may be taken as figure or shape, and colour cannot be known without body, nor can hypostasis be known without nature.[29] In this context Maximus obviously says that we cannot understand figure or colour except as the figure and colour of a body. What Maximus says about the hypostasis could be interpreted thus: it is not possible to understand the hypostasis except as the hypostasis of this particular nature. It follows that Peter is in all respects man or human being. There is nothing in Peter that is not human. On the other hand, to be man or

[27] The general ontology that is worked out above is not limited to human beings only, but in the present context my objective is to investigate how Maximus' concept of a distinctly human hypostasis is to be understood.

[28] *Opusc.* 23, PG 91: 264a-b.

[29] The question is what this means. Does it mean that it is not possible to think of figure and colour in separation from body or that we cannot come to know figure and shape without having come to know them from bodily beings? In the last case nothing prevents that they may be thought of separately when they once have been abstracted.

human being is not in all respects to be Peter—to be man is not limited to him—since John, Paul, and countless other individuals can be said to be "man" or "human being" as well.

In his *Opusculum* 10, Maximus makes a distinction between "being something (τι)" and "being someone (τις)."[30] This can be taken together with what we found above, viz. that it is a feature of being a hypostasis that it indicates a "someone." In *Opusculum* 10, he also brings the important concepts of *potentiality* and *activity* into the picture and says that we are active as being "something" since activity (ἐνέργεια) springs from the potentiality of the essence.[31] However, whenever an entity "gives form to the mode of activity" (τὸν τῆς ἐνεργείας σχηματίζει τρόπον) it manifests itself as a "someone." In other words, the character of being a hypostasis consists in the capacity to give form to the mode of activity. I interpret Maximus the following way: a human being is a hypostasis when he or she assumes the human essence with the potentiality (or power) of this essence in such a way that he or she forms its activities as belonging to himself or herself *qua* a someone. A human being cannot simply be understood as an essence that could be defined, but should be understood as a being who essentially carries with him or her a potentiality for activities (cf. the triad in *Chapters on Knowledge*, mentioned above). *In order to be an hypostasis, an entity must be a someone that gives form to its mode of activity*. However, this condition is necessary but not sufficient for an entity to be a human hypostasis in the Maximian sense.

Now, if Peter is in all respects man, could we identify this *hypostatic* character of "Petrine being" or "Petrine manhood" a bit closer? I suggest that two more things should be brought into the picture: first, Maximus' doctrine of a combination of properties and, secondly, the doctrine that the hypostasis has its own *logos*.[32]

[30] *Opusc.* 10, PG 91: 137a.

[31] Cf. here *Chapters on knowledge* 1, 1-10 as well.

[32] There is, maybe, a third thing here, viz. Maximus' understanding of assumption in the Christological sense. Maximus talks about the ineffable assumption (πρόσληψις) of human nature in the Incarnation (cf. *Amb.* 5, CCSG 48: 21.36-41). When Christ became man in the whole of His being, He assumed a human form and appropriated *as His own* (ὡς ἰδίαν αὐτοῦ) the whole of what man is (*Amb.* 5, CCSG 48: 23.85-9). The divine hypostasis of Christ, with its divine nature, appropriated humanity and, I suggest, acted like a *principle of appropriation* for His human essence. What does this mean? I suggest that this *principle of appropriation* is the hypostasis-character of an entity.

In *Opusculum* 26 (PG 91: 276a-b) Maximus gives two rather interesting definitions of individual and hypostasis:

> An individual is, according to the philosophers, a collection of properties, and this bundle cannot be contemplated in another; according to the Fathers, such are Peter and Paul, or someone else, each of whom is distinct from other men by virtue of their own, personal properties.
>
> An hypostasis is, according to the philosophers, an essence with properties; according to the Fathers, it is the particular man, who as person is distinct from other men.

How should this be interpreted? What is the difference between the "according to the philosophers" and the "according to the Fathers"? One possible interpretation could be that the philosophers define an individual as well as an hypostasis in an abstract and general way: an individual as well as an hypostasis is (i) a collection of properties and (ii) a logical subject of properties, possibly conceived as abstract predicates. If, for instance, a particular entity is defined this way, it is defined as a man with the general properties of, let us say, curly hair, being a fisherman, being the son of someone, etc. Even if none of the predicates are exclusive for the particular entity in question, the total combination is unique, but even so it is put in a quite general and logical way. We saw above that Maximus in *Opusculum* 10 distinguishes between "being something" (τι) and "being someone" (τις). Maybe we could say that the particular human being is defined "according to the philosophers" as "something," i.e., as an instantiation of the human essence. The Fathers, on the other hand, define individual and hypostasis as a nameable subject (for instance Peter) and as a *someone* that is distinct from other such "someones" by personal properties. One question is how Maximus understands the term "personal properties." At this point, one should be careful not to introduce modern notions of personal properties. That would be irrelevant here. In his *Categories* (chapter 2), Aristotle says something that may shed some light on this last point: "And then there is that class of things that are present in a subject, but that cannot be said of a subject." He gives the examples of a piece of grammatical knowledge (ἡ τὶς γραμματικὴ) and some particular whiteness (ἡ τὶ λευκὸν). What he has in mind is, probably, concretely existing proper-

ties that are founded in a particular entity. Is this what Maximus has in mind? Törönen makes a quotation from Maximus' *Letter* 15 (PG 91: 545a, slightly modified by me) that may be relevant here:[33] "For each one of us both participates in being by virtue of the common *logos* of essence, and is so-and-so by virtue of the properties which are around the *logos* of essence." Could the personal properties, then, be particular properties that identify a particular being? If Maximus may be interpreted this way, it should be possible here to distinguish a concept of individual and hypostasis that is conceived as "something" ("according to the philosophers") from a concept of individual and hypostasis that is a "someone" ("according to the Fathers"). However, the difference is not particularly striking, and the interpretation I have offered here is only a suggestion or an hypothesis, since it does not seem to me that Maximus felt the urgent need to distinguish the concepts of individual and hypostasis the same way that modern thinkers do.[34] Even so, his full understanding of hypostasis is, as we shall see, quite rich.

In addition to be *a nameable someone, distinguished by personal properties, who gives form to its mode of activity*, each hypostasis is created in accordance, not only with the *logos* of man, but with the *logos* of his human person (hypostasis).[35] Here we meet the doctrine of man being created in *the image and likeness of God*. As we shall see, it brings with it not only a distinctive dynamics but also a mystery, since what we are in our deepest self, is hidden in the divine intention (*logos*). To be human and to be a person is basically, therefore, not our achievement, but is rather a gracious gift from God. Even so, there is something to be achieved by our own effort, viz., as we saw above, how we *give form to the mode of activity*. However, something is definitely given before any activity occurs. The mystery that each of us is, is kept in the divine

[33] See Törönen (2007), 53. Maximus quotes these words from St Basil's *Letter* 214, and he probably approves them. Cf. Törönen's note 26.

[34] St John of Damascus says that hypostasis means two things. It may simply mean essence (οὐσία) or it may mean the individual or the distinct person (cf. *Dialectica*, ed. Kotter 1, 93). Further John says that the fathers called the particular (τὸ δὲ μερικὸν) individual, person, and hypostasis, such as Peter and Paul (cf. *Dialectica*, ed. Kotter 1, 94). Cf. Louth (2002), 47-53 and Törönen (2007), 52-55. I agree basically with Louth and Törönen even if I try to develop the concept of hypostasis a bit further.

[35] Cf. *Opusc.* 23, PG 91: 264a-b (quoted above): "For nature has the *logos* of being that is common, while the hypostasis in addition has the *logos* of being that belongs to itself."

being. Whenever we act out of the potential that is ontologically given, we give form to the mode of action *in accordance with* or *discordant with* our nature (κατὰ φύσιν, παρὰ φύσιν) or, which comes to the same, in accordance with or discordant with the *logos* of our being (κατὰ λόγον, παρὰ λόγον). The divine purpose of our life consists in this, that we should enter the mode of activity that is in accordance with the *logos* of our nature and realize our essential potential as an hypostasis. Christ, Maximus says, restores me to myself (ἐμαυτῷ) or rather to God.[36] From this we may gather that it is essentially in the movement of *conversion* (ἐπιστροφή) that man becomes a *true* human hypostasis. It is interesting that something quite similar occurs in the constitution of hypostases in Neoplatonist systems, for instance according to Plotinus.[37] An intelligible entity does not become itself simply in its separation from its source (i.e., in the procession, πρόοδος), but is rather constituted in its own identity by the activity of conversion to its source.

Maximus obviously thinks it is possible for man *not* to be his proper self. One may live a life of delusion, separated from ones true purpose.[38] My own self, my true self is kept in God, in the principles, i.e., the *logoi*, mystically contemplated by Him. This ontology has a lot of important aspects, one of which concerns what we could call the principle of or even the ontology of communion. Man is made in such a way that when he lives in accordance with his *logos* and executes his essential potential in the proper way, he may recognize that his being is divinely interconnected with the being of all other beings defined by the *logoi*.[39] In other words, he may discover contemplatively in himself his interconnectedness with all being established by God. Man was originally designed as a microcosm, but failed as such. However, the economy of Christ restored ecclesiastically the microcosmic being of human nature and re-established the conditions of ontological communion between all creatures.[40] To be fully actualized as a human hypostasis involves therefore the recognition of this *essential* ontological bond between all

[36] *Myst.* 5, CCSG 69: 24.

[37] Cf. Tollefsen (2012), 25, Louth (2002), 52-3.

[38] Maximus' spiritual writings, such as the *Chapters of love* and the *Chapters of knowledge*, are to a large extent about the restoration of one's proper being or one's proper self.

[39] Cf. *Amb.* 7, PG 91: 1081b.

[40] Cf. *Amb.* 41 for this. The *Mystagogia* is also important in this regard.

beings that are made by God. This has wide implications, both for the interpretation of Maximus' doctrine of the spiritual life and for the development of a Christian consciousness of responsibility for our natural environment. To be oneself hypostatically means to be interconnected actively with all there is and to be responsible for ones mode of activity in relation to every creature.

What further implications could this have? It is tempting to say that this last feature of the hypostasis-character, as presented by Maximus, should be interpreted as some kind of "self," "selfhood," or "self-consciousness." But if we choose to do that, we immediately enter an arena in which we confront all sorts of modern ideas of "self," self-consciousness, and personhood. This confrontation should definitely be made in a critical attitude as to what is and what is not in harmony with Christian requirements. One should not forget, however, that an approach to self-consciousness in ancient thought should first and foremost be made from ancient sources.[41] However, that should have to be a topic for another investigation. On the other hand, whatever may result from such an investigation, Maximus understands the true self as a mystery to be achieved in the human being's stretching out for God. This self is not an autonomous entity in its own right. It is rather an entity that is realized in a life characterized by *being in accordance with* what is not as such human, viz. with divine principles.

There is a lot more to be said about the mystery of being an hypostasis according to St Maximus, especially if one, in addition to the rather ontological categories that have been outlined above, dives into his anthropology proper and his doctrine of the spiritual life. However, ontological considerations are important as well. What we have found is that an hypostasis or a person is a nameable someone that is created with a mystical selfhood in the image and likeness of God. It is characterized by the *essential* potentiality self-determined to give form to the mode of its own activity. Whenever it is on its way to achieve itself in the proper way, it discovers itself as *essentially* interconnected with all being that is made by God. St Maximus' concept of hypostasis cannot be separated from his concept of essence or nature and activity. This way he thinks communion is not founded on the concept of hypostasis

[41] One could, for instance, start with the material gathered in Sorabji ed. (2004a), 134-71.

as such, but rather on the concept of essence or nature. The hypostasis, however, is the ontologically basic structure, the content of which is the essence as defining the potential that may issue in activities *formed* by the someone who is an hypostasis or a person.

Abbreviations:

CAG *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, Berlin 1882-1909.

CCSG *Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca*, Brepols, Turnhout.

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St Maximus the Confessor's Contribution(s) to the Notion of Freedom

Demetrios Bathrellos

I. Introduction

In August 656, while exiled at Bizya, Maximus was visited by Bishop Theodosius, a representative of the court and the Monothelite church of the capital. To his question, "how are you, my lord Father," Maximus replied that, "As God preordained before all ages a way of life for me in His providence, that's how I am." Theodosius, a little startled, asked again: "How can you say that? Did God preordain our individual destinies before all time?" To this Maximus replied that, "if He had foreknowledge, assuredly He preordained as well." Theodosius asked again: "What is the exact meaning of the words 'had foreknowledge' and 'preordained'?" Maximus replied: "Foreknowledge pertains to thoughts and words and actions which come from us [ἐφ' ἡμῖν]. Predestination pertains to those accidents which do not come from us [οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν]." Then Theodosius asked once again: "Which are those matters that are from us and which those that are not from us?" And Maximus replied again: "The matters which are from us are all acts of volition, that is to say virtues and vices. Those which are not from us are inflictions of kinds of punishments which happen to us, or their opposites. I mean that neither the punishment of illness is from us, nor the gladness of good health, although the operating causes of these states [do originate from within us]. For example, the cause of illness is intemperance, just as the cause of good health is temperance, and the cause of the kingdom of heaven is the keeping of the commandments, just as the cause of eternal fire, too, is transgressing them." Then to Theodo-

sius' question: "How can you say that? Is that why you suffer in this place of exile, because you have committed some deeds worthy of this suffering?" Maximus replied: "I pray that, by this suffering, God may limit the punishments of which I was guilty in sinning against him by transgressing his commandments, which bring justification."[1]

In this most interesting dialogue, we get a glimpse of how St Maximus understands the relation between divine providence and human freedom. The Pauline term that Maximus uses here ("προώρισεν")[2] brings to mind the fundamental and controversial protestant doctrine of predestination. However, Maximus would not accept anything like this doctrine, since the "predestination" he talks about concerns only the circumstances of our lives, not the way in which we freely respond to them. Although he believes that our freedom has limits set upon it by God himself,[3] Maximus is neither a predestinarian nor a determinist. Man is free, and the way in which he uses his freedom determines his eternal fate. It all depends on how he chooses to relate to God and on whether he obeys his commandments or not. The commandments of God are justifying. If man obeys them, he will inherit life everlasting. If he does not, he will be punished eternally in hell. Maximus' language is harsh and unambiguous.

Maximus' emphasis on obedience, however, brings to mind *Christ's* obedience to the Father, exemplified primarily in the garden of Gethsemane. The Monothelite controversy of the seventh century offered to Maximus the opportunity to produce the last and fullest synthesis of patristic Christology in a manner that places the question of the human will and freedom at the center. A full account of Maximus' understanding of and contributions to the concept of human freedom in general would require a large book. In this short paper, I will only stick to Christology, not only for the sake of brevity but also because in Jesus Christ—and in Jesus Christ alone—are we able to see the true man and human freedom in its authenticity.

[1] For the text and the translation (slightly modified here), see *Disputatio inter Maximum et Theodosium, Episcopum Caesareae Bithyniae*, in Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil (eds), *Maximus the Confessor and his Companions: Documents from Exile* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 76-9. Maximus expresses similar views also elsewhere, for instance in *Epistle* 1, PG 91, 368D – 369C.

[2] *Romans*, 8: 29-30.

[3] As we see in the passage quoted above, there are things that do not come from us, things that are 'οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν', and these are determined by God.

II. The philosophical background

Ancient and late antique Greek philosophy was often excessively intellectualistic. As I have argued elsewhere, according to the fundamental intellectualistic thrust of this philosophy, human will was effectively reduced to a by-product of cognition. As Socrates, for instance, has been reported to believe, "nobody fails or does evil on purpose. Every evil action is due either to ignorance or to the fact that the evil-doer acts against reason because his irrational impulses are stronger than reason."[4] Furthermore, Aristotle seems to see "a link of necessity between the judgment rendered by the intellect and the immediate action followed thereupon," which allows no room for a faculty of will.[5] For the Stoics, "volitions or desires are a kind of beliefs."[6] Seneca, for instance, famously claimed that "I do not obey God, rather I agree with him"[7] Moreover, Plotinus is "committed to the idea that the reasonable soul cannot willingly or knowningly sin."[8] If a Christian version of these ideas were endorsed, salvation would be understood to come about basically through the transmission of knowledge.[9]

This approach curtails human freedom in a drastic manner. Man will inevitably do what he knows is right—except perhaps in cases where he is not strong enough to control his sub-rational impulses and desires. But this reflects neither reality nor a Christian understanding of it. It must be conceded that sometimes people know what is good and try to do it, but the compulsive power of sin does not allow them to—Paul has articulated this in a dramatic way in *Romans*, 7: 14-25. At other times though, men know very well what is right and yet choose to do what is wrong. Nicollo Machiavelli is not wholly unjustified in claiming that men are "good" only when this serves their inter-

[4] Albrecht Dihle, *The Theory of Will in Classical Antiquity*, Sather Classical Lectures, 48 (Berkley: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 38-9.

[5] George Charles Berthold, "Freedom and Liberation in the Theology of Maximus the Confessor" (unpublished doctoral thesis, Catholic Institute of Paris, 1975), p. 149.

[6] Susanne Bobzien, "The Inadvertent Conception and Late Birth of the Free-Will Problem", *Phronesis* 43 (1998), p. 142.

[7] See *Epistle* 96. 2, cited by Dihle, *Theory of Will*, p. 18.

[8] R. A. Jun. Norris, *Manhood and Christ: A Study in the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 49.

[9] For the above, see Demetrios Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of St Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 190.

ests.[10] Even worse perhaps, people often use excuses or invent ideologies in order to justify their sinful choices, and sometimes they even come to believe them. The idealized picture of man as a fundamentally good and rational being, which the antiquity-smitten Enlightenment produced, was shuttered on the philosophical level by the masters of "the hermeneutics of suspicion," that is Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche, and on the historical level by the first World War. In the early Church, it was tested and found wanting primarily in the ascetic struggle of the Christian monks, and it was also officially condemned in the fifth century as the Pelagian heresy.

III. The theological background

By Maximus' times, two divergent approaches to Christology had been deployed. The first was shared by theologians who tended to emphasize the unity of Christ in a way that often overshadowed the reality or the significance of his humanity. According to the heretical version of this approach, put forward by Apollinarius of Laodicea and his disciples in the fourth century and the monothelites in the seventh, Christ could not have had a human will. Because this will would necessarily and inevitably oppose the divine will—namely it would turn Christ into a sinner.[11] In the orthodox form of the same Christological approach, as we find it, for instance, in St Athanasius, the human will of Christ does not seem to have a distinct, clearly developed soteriological function and significance.[12]

[10] For an interesting presentation of Machiavelli's anthropology, see Philippe Nemo, *Histoire des idées politiques aux temps modernes et contemporains* (Puf, 2002), pp. 48ff.

[11] For Apollinarius, see, for instance, Απολλινάριος, *Προς Ιουλιανόν*, in Hans Lietzmann, *Apollinaris von Laodicea und seine Schule: Texte und Untersuchungen* (Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr, 1904), pp. 247. 22-7 and 247. 30 – 248. 7. For the Monothelites of the seventh century, see Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, esp. pp. 60-98..

[12] The question of whether for Athanasius Christ had a soul or not has been endlessly debated. A negative answer to this question has been given, among others, by Marcel Richard, "Saint Athanase et la psychologie du Christ selon les Ariens", *Mélanges de Science Religieuse* 4 (1947), pp. 5-54, J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5th edn. (London: A&C Black, 1977), pp. 284-9, and R.P.C Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318 – 381AD* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2005), pp. 446-58. Alloys Grillmeier attempted a more balanced approach (*Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*, i, *Von den Apostolischen Zeit bis zum Konzil von Chalcedon (451)* (Freiburg: Herder, 1979), pp. 460-79. The same applies to G. Christopher Stead, "The Scriptures and the Soul of Christ in Athanasius", *Vigiliae Christianae* 36 (1982), pp. 233-50. For a positive answer to the above question, see, for instance, T.F. Torrance, "Athanasius: A Study in the Foundations of Classical Christology", in *idem Theology in Reconciliation* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1975), pp. 215-66 and A. Pettersen, "Did Athanasius Deny Christ's Fear?", *Scottish Journal of Theology* 39 (1986), pp. 327-40 and "The Courage of Christ in the Theology of Athanasius", *Scottish Journal of Theology* 40 (1987), pp. 363-77. For a helpful overview, see K.K. Ng Nathan, "The Soul of Christ in St Athanasius", *Coptic Church Review* 22.1 (2001), pp. 24-6. In my view, the evidence for Athanasius' acceptance of a human soul in Christ is overwhelming.

Moreover, the Arian controversy of the fourth century had complicated things further. Some prominent fourth century Fathers, including Athanasius[13] and Gregory of Nazianzus,[14] had argued that the *fiat* pronounced by Christ at Gethsemane belonged to his divine will. They said this in order to argue that Christ is God, since, as the *fiat* is supposed to prove, his will is identical with the will of the Father and consequently divine. This view, however, if taken at face value, is theologically disastrous for four reasons. First, it confusingly identifies the will with the object of willing: Since Christ willed (object of willing) what the Father willed (object of willing), his will (as a faculty) had to be divine, as the Father's. Second, it implies that the human will of Christ could only express his sub-rational, instinctive aversion to death, but not his free decision to die in obedience to the Father. Third, the attribution of Christ's obedience to his "divine" will bears Arian overtones, since in this case Christ would not be fully God, for He would obey the Father with his "divine" will. And fourth, the aforementioned view leads to the conclusion that between the human will of Christ and his divine will there was a contrariety: the human will does not will death, the divine does—which smacks of Apollinarism. This interpretation of the Gethsemane passage is unsustainable, for in fact Christ in Gethsemane addresses God the Father *as man* and obeys him via his human will. Its fundamental confusion between the will as faculty and the object of willing will re-emerge in the seventh century and beset those who try to resolve the relevant Christological conundrums.[15]

[13] Athanasius, *Contra Arianos III*, PG 26. 441B-C.

[14] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 30, 12, PG 36 117C – 120B and Paul Gallay avec la collaboration de Maurice Jourjon, *Grégoire de Nazianze: Discours 27-31 (Discours Théologiques)*, Sources Chrétiennes 250 (Paris: Cerf, 1978), pp. 248.1 – 252. 38.

[15] For a detailed account of the interpretation of Christ's prayer in Gethsemane prior to Maximus the Confessor, see Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, pp. 140-7. For Maximus' own interpretation of the same passage, see, *inter alia*, *Opusc.* 6, PG 91, 65A – 69A.

Finally, the theological mindset of the so-called Alexandrian Christology had occasionally the tendency to highlight the "physical" dimension of our salvation, brought about through the deification of humanity by virtue of its unity with the divinity in the hypostasis of the Logos. Accordingly, it did not always give due weight to the moral parameters of Christology. Thus, the significance of the free human obedience of the Son to the Father throughout his life and especially in Gethsemane was not always sufficiently emphasized.[16]

But if some of the aforementioned theologians were not always—or were not at all—able to articulate the theological significance of the freedom of Jesus, some others, often grouped as "the school of Antioch," turned it into a key aspect of their Christology. There has been an enormous attempt in the twentieth century to discover the true and undistorted-by-theological-polemics teaching of this school's most significant representatives, namely Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius, but modern scholarship does not seem to have been able to challenge the traditional view in a fundamental and conclusive way. It still seems true that Theodore and Nestorius shared a rather weak understanding of Christ's unity.[17] This unity was largely dependent on Jesus' obedience to the divine will. It was not a natural union (φυσικὴ ἕνωσις)[18] or a union according to hypostasis (ἕνωσις καθ' ὑπόστασιν),[19] as

[16] Hanson goes too far in arguing that for Athanasius the "doctrine of the Incarnation has almost swallowed up any doctrine of the Atonement, has rendered it unnecessary. Once the *Logos* has taken human flesh on himself, in a sense, certainly in principle, redemption is accomplished" (*The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 450). However, this tendency may be traced in some writings of the so-called "school of Alexandria".

[17] For a useful, albeit not up-to-date, overview of the issue of Theodore's orthodoxy, see John S. Romanides, "Highlights in the Debate over Theodore of Mopsuestia's Christology and some Suggestions for a Fresh Approach", *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 5 (1959-60), pp. 140-53 and R.A. Iun. Norris, *Manhood and Christ: A Study in the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 246-62. For the question of Nestorius' orthodoxy, see Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, i, 2nd rev. edn., trans. John Bowden (London: Mowbray, 1975), pp. 559-68. For a more recent treatment of the Antiochene tradition, see Paul B. Clayton, Jr. *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 53-74 and *passim*.

[18] See, for instance, Cyril's *3rd Letter to Nestorius*, in Lionel R. Wickham, *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 5, p. 18. 27 and 12, p. 28. 31-2.

[19] See, for instance, Cyril's *2nd Letter to Nestorius*, in Wickham, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 3, p. 6. 1 and 6, p. 8. 16-7.

Cyril, for instance, typically called it, but rather a moral union. This underscored the importance of Jesus' human freedom, but it did so in a way that, on the one hand, undermined the hypostatic unity between divinity and humanity brought about by the Incarnation of the Logos, and, on the other hand, led to an unacceptable moralism, which threatened to reduce Christ to something like an Old Testament prophet and Christianity to a Judaic type of religion, according to which our unity with God is founded and almost exhausted in the keeping of his commandments.[20]

Origenism was one last component of Maximus' theological background. Origenism's religious myth claimed that initially all spirits were united with God. But then they fell because of satiety. After a long period of purification, however, they will return to their initial state. But they may fall again, which will entail the repetition of the whole story *ad infinitum*. Here we find a self-contradictory maximization and, at the same time, minimization of human freedom. Man will be always, even in the state of full unity with God, "free" to say no to Him and to reject Him. But also he will have always to return to Him in the end. It seems that satiety and punishment do not leave much room for man either to remain freely with God or to stay freely away from him.[21]

IV. Maximus' view of human freedom in its post-lapsarian form and in Christ

For Maximus, human will has two aspects: the rational self-determining one and the sub-rational and instinctive.[22] The latter moves to acts of willing without the free, personal intervention of the person.[23] The will for life and the aversion to death, the will to eat, to drink, to

[20] For more on this, see Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, pp. 16-24.

[21] For Maximus' dealing with Origenism, see Polycarp Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of Saint Maximus the Confessor and his Refutation of Origenism*, Studia Anselmiana, 36 (Rome: Orbis Catholicus, Herder, 1955).

[22] For more on this, see Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, pp. 121-6.

[23] In his *Mystagogy*, for instance, Maximus distinguishes between the intellectual (νοερά) and the vital (ζωτική) powers of the soul and argues that the former moves according to will (κατὰ βούλησιν), whereas the latter moves unwillingly according to nature (κατὰ φύσιν ἀπροαιρέτως) (PG 91, 672D); see also the critical edition by Charalambos G. Sotēropoulos, *The Mystagogy of Saint Maximus the Confessor*, 2nd edn. (Athens: n.p., 1993), p. 164. 6-9; and also the critical edition by Christian Boudignon, *Maximi Confessoris Mystagogia*, CCSG 69 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), p. 20. 288-92.

sleep, etc., are natural, instinctive volitional movements. They are not sinful in themselves, but often have to be resisted for the sake of ascesis or of obedience to God. Christ's *fiat* in Gethsemane exemplifies this. His will to avoid death is natural and blameless. However, by virtue of his free, rational human will, Christ was able to take the human decision to oppose the instinctive object of willing that desired life, through a volitional act of self-denial that conformed to the will of God.[24]

Maximus characterizes the human will as self-determining (αυτεξούσιον).[25] This means that human will is not subject to any internal or external determinism. However, it does not mean that human will operates in an ontological, existential, and moral vacuum. After the Fall, human will is marred by sin and functions in a way that Maximus has described as *gnōmē* or *gnomic* will and as *proairesis*. We do not need to mention here all the relevant technical details of his terminology, but in general, for Maximus the *gnōmic* and *proairetic* will usually signify the human natural will in its post-lapsarian form and function.[26] This is marked by ignorance and deliberation, oscillation between good and evil, and the possibility, or perhaps even the probability, of choosing evil instead of good.[27]

Maximus applies all this to man after the Fall. But when he comes to Christ, he gives us a different picture. Christ's humanity is not stained by the blameful consequences of the Fall. In him we find neither ignorance and deliberation, nor oscillation between good and evil, nor even the possibility of choosing evil. His human will is not simply sinless, but also deified, on account of its unity with the divinity. As a result of this deification,

[24] For more on this, see Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, pp. 146-7.

[25] *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, PG 91, 301B-C.

[26] As John Zizioulas pointed out to me, a certain type of *gnomic* will may be seen also before the Fall, and it is precisely this that made the Fall, namely man's turning away from God, possible. However, only after the Fall man is internally, so to speak, affected by sin, which means that his will and the way in which he uses it are significantly shaped by his fallen condition.

[27] For more on this, see, for instance, *Opusc.* 1, PG 91, 28D – 32B. See also R.-A. Gauthier, "Saint Maxime le Confesseur and la psychologie de l' acte humain", *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 21 (1954), pp. 57-82; Marcel Doucet, "Dispute de Maxime le Confesseur avec Pyrrhus: Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes" (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Montreal, 1972), pp. 355-85; Jose Julian Prado, *Voluntad y Naturaleza: La Antropologia Filosofica de Maximo el Confesor* (Rio Cuarto: Edicioneses de la Universidad Nacional de Rio Cuarto, 1974), esp. pp. 183-214 and 260-5; Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, 2nd edn. (Chicago: Open Court, 1995), pp. 218-26; Jean-Claude Larchet, *La Divinisation de l' homme selon Saint Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris: Cerf, 1996), pp. 135-41; Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, pp. 127-8.

Christ's fundamental moral orientation, predisposition, or maxim—to put it in slightly Kantian terms,[28] is towards the good, towards doing the will of God. Ignorance, oscillation between good and evil, and possibility of choosing evil are excluded from the beginning.[29] Christ takes concrete human decisions; there are in his life specific acts of his *human* will—such as the Gethemane *fiat* —but these do not presuppose a *gnomic* or *proairetic* will. In Christ, human will reaches its best and highest form, because it is taken up by God the Logos. He, as personal willing subject, moves and forms it in accordance with the divine will of God the Father.[30]

V. Further anthropological implications

Now, let us see, in more detail, some anthropological aspects and implications of Maximus' aforementioned teaching, which will further manifest his contributions to the notion of freedom.

1. For Maximus, the human will is natural. It belongs to nature, not to person. Maximus openly disagrees with Pyrrhus' claim that what is natural is also necessarily unfree or compelled ("τὸ δὲ φυσικὸν πάντως καὶ ἠναγκασμένον").[31] For Maximus, "nothing which is natural is involuntary in the rational nature."[32] However, Maximus refers here to the rational part of human nature,[33] and thus he leaves out the instinctive movements of our subrational humanity, the emergence of which are independent of our volitional consent. Moreover, for Maximus, even

[28] On this, see Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, trans. by Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2009), pp. 17ff. However, between the approaches of Maximus and Kant there are important differences, which cannot be discussed here.

[29] In his *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, for instance, Maximus argues that "it is not possible to say that Christ had a *gnōmē*. For his [human] being, which subsisted divinely, had naturally an inclination to the good and a drawing away from evil, just as Basil, the great eye of the Church said when explaining the interpretation of the forty-fourth Psalm: 'by the same line of interpretation, Isaiah said the same thing: [...] 'before the child knows good or evil, it refuses evil in order to choose the good'. For the word 'before' indicates that he had by nature what is good, not inquiring and deliberating as we do [...].'" (PG 91, 309A). For the English translation I have consulted, but not always followed, Joseph P. Farrell, *The Disputation with Pyrrhus of our Father among the Saints Maximus the Confessor* (n.p., n.p., n.d.), p. 32.

[30] For an analysis of this, see Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, pp. 148-74.

[31] *Pyrr.*, PG 91, 293B; For Maximus' refutation of this view, see *ibid.* 293B – 296A.

[32] *Pyrr.*, PG 91, 293D – 296A. For the English translation I have consulted Farrell, *The Disputation with Pyrrhus*, p. 13.

[33] *Pyrr.*, PG 91, 293B – 296A. In the same work, Maximus argues that in contradistinction to all other natures, the distinctive movement of the rational nature is self-determining. By contrast, the animal nature's movement is that of impulse (καθ' ὁρμήν'); *ibid.*, 301A-B.

our rational self-determining will is not "free" in the sense of being devoid of orientation. It is by nature oriented to God, although this orientation is affected and often misdirected by sin.[34]

2. On the other hand, if will belongs to nature, the mode of willing, namely the actualization of the human will in concrete acts of willing, belongs to person.[35] Human nature has the ability, the potentiality, and the power of willing, by virtue of which the person, as the subject of willing, proceeds to specific volitional acts. Even our natural orientation towards God has to become particularized by each person in specific acts of willing.[36] These personal acts of willing are not meant to oppose nature but to use its God-given capacity of willing in a way pleasing to God. For Maximus, the first step is not to achieve freedom from nature but freedom from passions ("ἡ τῶν παθῶν παντελὴς ἐλευθερία," as he puts it).[37] Man should conform will (*gnōmē*) to nature, in order to avoid what is against nature.[38] Furthermore, he should voluntarily use the law of grace in order to renew the law of nature.[39] But moreover—and this is the third and final step—he should also move willingly (βουλήσει τε καὶ γνώμῃ κατὰ προαίρεσιν) *beyond nature* and toward God. Thus he will experience an *ekstasis* from nature and achieve deification, which is ὑπὲρ φύσιν.[40]

3. For Maximus, human will is a distinct faculty and not simply a by-product of intellect and cognition. Jesus' *fiat* at Gethsemane is important not because it is rational, namely in conformity with the demands of reason, but because it is an obedient response to the will of God. Man's existential predicament has not to do only with the lack of knowledge, but also with his voluntary decision to be against God. In this sense, psychological and religious attempts at "self-discovery" are at best inadequate. This does not mean that truth does not contribute to our freedom. Christ himself has said that "you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."[41] It simply means that knowledge cannot determine or compel human freedom; it is not, by and of itself, salvific.

[34] For more on this, see Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, esp. pp. 188-9.
[35] See, for instance, Maximus' *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, PG 91, 292D – 293B.
[36] On this, see Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, pp. 188-9.
[37] *Ep.* 32, PG 91, 628A.
[38] *Ep.* 3, PG 91, 309A.
[39] *Ep.* 2, PG 91, 396C-D.
[40] *Ep.* 9, PG 91, 445C-D; see also *ibid.* 448A-B.
[41] John, 8: 32. Translation taken from the English Standard Version.

4. What was mentioned above has obvious implications for soteriology and, in particular. the question of *Apokatastasis*, which in our times has become, once more, very popular—even among theologians. At this point, I will only quote Fr Georges Florovsky at some length.

> St. Gregory of Nyssa anticipated a kind of universal conversion of souls in the afterlife, when the Truth of God will be revealed and manifested with compelling evidence. Just at that point the limitation of the Hellenic mind is obvious. Evidence seemed to it to be the decisive motive for the will, as if "sin" were merely ignorance. The Hellenic mind had to pass through a long and hard experience of asceticism, of ascetic self-examination and self-control, in order to overcome this intellectualistic naïveté and illusion and discover a dark abyss in the fallen soul. Only in St. Maximus the Confessor, after some centuries of ascetic preparation, do we find a new and deepened interpretation of the *Apokatastasis.* Indeed, the order of creation will be fully restored in the last days. But the dead souls will still be insensitive to the very revelation of Light. The Divine Light will shine to all, but those who once have chosen darkness will be still unwilling and unable to enjoy the eternal bliss. They will still cling to the nocturnal darkness of selfishness. They will be unable precisely to enjoy. They will stay "outside"— because union with God, which is the essence of salvation, presupposes and requires the determination of will. Human will is irrational and its motives cannot be rationalized. Even "evidence" may fail to impress and move it.[42]

5. Human will and freedom are in desperate need of healing. This healing has both an internal and an external dimension. Maximus believed that the internal purity of man is as important as his outside, moral behavior. He was fiercely opposed to the Nestorian view that Christ was internally sinful, namely stained by the sinful desires and impulses that result from fallen humanity, and only externally and actually sinless, namely, insofar as he never committed a sinful act. For Maximus, Christ was ἀπαθὴς (passionless) not simply ἐγκρατὴς (continent).[43] He did not have to fight against sinful passions and desires, because He had none. To say that Christ had a *gnomic* and *proairetic* will was for Maxi-

[42] Georges Florovsky, "The Last Things and the Last Events", in *Collected Works*, iii, *Creation and Redemption* (Belmont, Massachusetts: Norland Publishing Company, 1976), p. 263. Florovsky's characterization of the will as "irrational" probably means that it is not necessarily subject and obedient to reason.
[43] *Opusc.* 1, PG 91, 28D.

mus a great blasphemy, even if one hasted to add that by this He always chose the good in the end. Maximus did not share the Christological, and by implication anthropological, moralism of the school of Antioch, which posited that Christ had to struggle in order to overcome sinful inclinations.[44] For Maximus, Christ's humanity was pure and holy from the very beginning, and his moral struggle, exemplified in Gethsemane *par excellence*, was a volitional expression of his holiness.[45]

6. Nestorian Old-Testament inspired moralism had a central dimension: It tended to reduce the unity between the Logos and the "assumed man" to the identity of their object of willing ([τ]αυτοβουλία) resulting from the obedience of the latter.[46] Maximus' response to this was that Christ's human obedience to the Father did not lead to but was preceded by the deification of his humanity.[47] If we attempt to see the implications of this view for anthropology, we may justifiably argue that, *mutatis mutandis*, it naturally leads to what Nicholas Cabasilas would later argue in detail in his masterpiece *On the Life in Christ*.[48] The first step of the life in Christ is the sacramental cleansing and restoration of our humanity and of its faculties—and then follows the moral struggle that leads to holiness. A moralistic approach that underemphasizes the sacramental and charismatic presuppositions of moral life is inadequate and misleading.

[44] On this, see, for instance, *Opusc.* 1, PG 91, 28D–32A. This view is expressed in Theodore of Mopsuestia's *Contra Incarnationem*, in PG 66, 972A–992C and by Nestorius *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, trans. and ed. by G. R. Driver and Leonard Hodgson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925), p. 63.

[45] For an exploration of the question of the sinlessness of Jesus from an Eastern Orthodox point of view, see Demetrios Bathrellos, "The Sinlessness of Jesus: A Theological Exploration in the Light of Trinitarian Theology", in Paul Louis Metzger (ed.), *Trinitarian Soundings in Systematic Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), pp. 113-26. For the patristic background, see also my "The Patristic Tradition on the Sinlessness of Jesus", forthcoming in *Studia Patristica*.

[46] See, for instance, Nestorius' *Ἐκ τῆς λεγομένης αὐτῷ ἐπιφανούς μνήσεως λόγου β*, in Friedrich Loofs (ed.), *Nestoriana: Die Fragmente des Nestorius, Gesammelt, Untersucht und Herausgegeben* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1905), p. 224. 5-10. For Maximus' presentation and criticism of this view, see, for instance, *Opusculum* 15, PG 91, 172C – 173C and 180A. For a fuller treatment of Nestorian Christology and its moralism, see Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, in particular pp. 16-24.

[47] See, for instance, *Opusc.* 1, PG 91, 32A-B.

[48] For this work, see Nicolas Cabasilas, *La vie en Christ*, 1, Livres I-IV, Introduction, texte critique, traduction et annotation par Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, Sources Chrétiennes, 355 (Paris: Cerf, 2009) and Nicolas Cabasilas, *La vie en Christ*, 2, Livres V-VIII, Introduction, texte critique, traduction, annotation et index par Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, Sources Chrétiennes, 361 (Paris: Cerf, 2009).

7. Human freedom is not fundamentally served by the multiplication of choices on offer—especially if these are evil choices. As Rowan Williams has argued, the goodness of choice has to be demythologized. Maximization of choice may be either unnatural (when, for instance, people insist on choosing even their sex) or unfair (when it results in the marginalization of people who are left only with second or third rate options as a result of other people's choices) or morally wrong (as is shown by the fact that in the abortion debate one group is termed "pro-life" and the other "pro-choice," which, in fact means, by the standards of the first group, "pro-death").[49] Moreover, any emphasis on the significance of choices that disregards the fact that the only fundamental and all-important choice is the choice for or against God is essentially atheist.[50] True freedom is not to do so much with having many choices but with the ability to discern and make the right choice. To have access to evil choices and the possibility to choose them do not constitute the best type of freedom. Perfect freedom is that for which there is not even the possibility of choosing evil. Here Maximus is fundamentally at one with Augustine, who believed that "the will that cannot sin at all is more free than the will that can either sin or not sin."[51] He who cannot choose evil is holier than and superior to him who can choose evil, even if he eventually chooses good. A freedom for which the choice of evil is out of the question is the freedom of Christ and of the Saints in the kingdom.[52] The inability to choose good is its opposite. This is the "freedom" of the devil; it is the self-inflicted "freedom" of Hell.

8. Finally, from Maximus' point of view, we may safely conclude that human freedom is perfected through its conformity to divine freedom. Maximus insists that the human natural will is oriented towards God, who created it. Our freedom is, by nature, freedom *for* God. Therefore, the rejection of our God is also the rejection of our freedom. The modern atheistic slogan that only if God is dead can I be free expresses a tragic

[49] For more on some aspects of this question, see Archbishop Rowan Williams, "Childhood and Choice", in his *Lost Icons: Reflections on Cultural Bereavement* (London: T&T Clark, 2000), pp. 11-52.

[50] Cf. Florovsky, "The Last Things and the Last Events", p. 256.

[51] On this, see Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, II, tr. Geoffey W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), p. 258 n. 287.

[52] See *Opusc.* 20, in PG 91, 233D -236A and *Amb.*, PG 91, 1073B – 1076C.

misunderstanding. In fact, only if God is *not* dead can I be free, because only then may my freedom be raised by grace to the level of the divine, perfect freedom. As Maximus claims in a famous passage, he who loves God has become like Melchisedec "without father or mother or genealogy"[53] and is not kept by either the world or nature because of his unity with the Spirit.[54] In the opposite case, man's freedom is ensnared in the boundaries of sinful existence. It is defeated by sin and eventually by death. In God alone there is freedom to live, and to live abundantly.

[53] Hebrews, 7: 3; translation from Holy Bible, English Standard Version.
[54] *Cap. theol.*, PG 90, 1380B-C.

St Maximus the Confessor on the Will

David Bradshaw

My aim in this paper is to identify the distinctive contribution made by St Maximus to the development of theories of the will. I will also offer some tentative comments regarding the contemporary value of his contribution, particularly as regards the question of how the will can be *responsive* to reason without being *determined* by reason. I will draw for this purpose upon some stimulating remarks about St Maximus' theory by R.A. Gauthier and Thomas Madden, as well as the critique of their views by Richard Sorabji.[1]

Maximus' teaching about the will was of course not undertaken for its own sake, but in response to Monothelitism. The latter was in turn a refinement of Monoenergism, the doctrine that Christ possessed a single divine-human "energy" or *energeia*. Although the issue soon shifted from energy to that of whether Christ possessed one or two wills (*thelēmata*), it is important to bear this earlier stage of the debate in mind, for Maximus seems to have developed his thought about the two natural wills in Christ largely in isomorphism with his conviction regarding the two natural energies. This fact may help explain the direction ultimately taken by his thought about the will, as I will suggest below.

[1] See R.A. Gauthier and Jean Yves Jolif, *Aristote: l'Éthique à Nicomaque*, Second Edition (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1970), vol. 1, pt. 1, 255-66; John D. Madden, "The Authenticity of Early Definitions of Will (*Thelēsis*)," *Maximus Confessor*, ed. Feliz Heinzer and Christoph Schönborn (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1982), 61-79; Richard Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 337-39.

The monothelite assertion of one *thelēma* and *thelēsis* in Christ was intended to safeguard his unity as an acting agent. Although it is not always clear whether the Monothelites had in mind Christ's faculty of will, act of willing, or determinate will, they probably meant to include all three.[2] The objection raised by Maximus centered on the difficulty such a view creates for attributing any active role to the humanity of Christ. Maximus pointed repeatedly to the prayer of Christ in Gethsemane—"Father, if you will, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will (*thelēma*) but thine be done" (Luke 22:42)—as indicating that Christ had a distinctly human *thelēma*, and that this *thelēma* was capable of standing in tension (although not outright contradiction) to the divine will. In this verse, *thelēma* no doubt refers to what I have labeled determinate will. Nonetheless, for such a difference to be possible Christ must also have possessed a distinctly human capacity for willing, and that is the point on which Maximus focused.[3] As he saw it, the recognition of two distinct faculties of will is a necessary corollary to the Chalcedonian affirmation of Christ's two distinct natures, divine and human, for without it such an affirmation would be empty.

Maximus defines this natural faculty of will as "a faculty desirous (*orektikēn*) of what is in accordance with nature, which holds together all the attributes that belong essentially to a being's nature."[4] Although natural will so defined would seem to belong to all living things, Maximus plainly is interested primarily in the form that it takes in rational beings. Hence he goes on to define it further as "a simple rational (*logikē*) and vital desire," and in the *Disputation with Pyrrhus* he offers a number of descriptions which presuppose reason, including that it is rational desire (*logikē orexis*), self-determination (*to autexousion*), and desider-

[2] See discussion in Demetrios Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of Saint Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 74-76 (Sergius), 80-82 (Pyrrhus).

[3] Maximus preferred for the sake of precision to refer to the determinate will as that which is willed, *to thelēthen* or *thelēton*. See *Opuscula* 1 PG 91 25A-B, 16 185D-188D, *Disputation with Pyrrhus* (= *Opusc.* 28) 292C-D.

[4] Maximus, *Opusc.* 1 12C. See also the similar definition, "the essential striving (*ephesis*) for things constitutive in accordance with nature" (14 153B), with 3 45D-48A and 16 185D for repetitions of the first definition, and 26 276C for a repetition of the second (where it is ascribed, along with several similar definitions, to Clement of Alexandria), along with a further minor variant at 26 280A.

ative mind (*nous orektikos*).[5] Will *qua* rational desire is the master faculty governing the entire process that leads to intentional action: "willingly (*thelontes*) we think (*logizometha*), and wish (*boulometha*), and search (*zētoumen*), and consider (*skeptometha*), and deliberate (*bouleuometha*), and judge (*krinometha*), and are inclined toward (*diatithemetha*), and choose (*prohairoumetha*), and move toward (*hormōmen*), and use (*kechrēmetha*)."[6] Elsewhere Maximus calls it "the primary innate power among physical characteristics and movements," holding that by it alone we seek being, life, movement, thought, speech, perception, nourishment, sleep, rest, and all else that sustains nature.[7]

Rational wish (*boulēsis*) and choice (*prohairēsis*), which in classical thought are the primary acts of a volitional nature, are understood by Maximus as modes of *thelēsis*. The former is "imaginative desire both of things that are and are not up to us," or equivalently, an act of will (*thelēsis*) directed toward a particular object that may or may not be in our power.[8] The latter is desire, following upon deliberation and judgment, specifically for an object within our power; it constitutes, as Maximus puts it, a combination of desire, deliberation, and judgment.[9] This way of distinguishing *boulēsis* and *prohairesis* is largely Aristotelian and probably reached Maximus through Nemesius of Emesa.[10] Maximus thus incorporates a great deal of the classical (and

[5] *Opusc.* 1 13C, *Disp.* 293B, 301C, 317C. The phrase *orektikos nous* may be drawn from *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.2 1139b4, where, however, it is offered as definition of choice (*prohairesis*) rather than of *thelēsis*.

[6] *Disp.* 293B-C (where I take it *horōmen* is a typo for *hormōmen*); see also the similar passage at *Opusc.* 1 21D-24A, which makes it clear that these are meant as sequential stages. This sequence was repeated with slight emendations by St. John of Damascus in *De Fide Orthodoxa* and was known in that form (via the Latin translation of the latter work) to the scholastics. For discussion see R.A. Gauthier, "Saint Maxime le Confesseur et la psychologie de l'acte humain," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 21 (1954), 51-100; Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, Second Edition (Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 1995), 219-26; Michael Frede, "John of Damascus on Free Will," *Byzantine Philosophy and Its Ancient Sources*, ed. Katerina Ierodiakonou (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 63-95; Daniel Westberg, *Right Practical Reason: Aristotle, Action, and Prudence in Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 126-35.

[7] *Opusc.* 16 196A.

[8] *Opusc.* 1 13B, 21D; cf. *Disp.* 317C.

[9] *Opusc.* 1 13A-B, 16B-C.

[10] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* III.2 1111b19-26 and Nemesius of Emesa, *On the Nature of Man* 33. For discussion of Maximus' use of Nemesius see Gauthier, "Saint Maxime," 71-72; Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 219-25.

especially Aristotelian) analysis of volition under his own overarching category of *thelēsis*.

Another of Maximus' innovations was to distinguish from the natural will what he calls the "*gnomic* will" (*gnōmikon thelēma*). Maximus explains the distinction between natural and *gnomic* will on analogy with that between the capacity to speak, which belongs to nature, and how one speaks (*to pōs lalein*), which belongs to hypostasis.[11] He defines the *gnomic* will as "the self-chosen impulse and movement of reasoning (*logismou*) toward one thing or another."[12] As this definition indicates, the *gnomic* will is not a faculty—which would be redundant, given the role already assigned to the natural will—but instead an act made possible by the natural will. The particular direction of the *gnomic* will is shaped (*tupoumenon*) by a person's *gnōmē*, a fluid term which in this context would seem to mean character or inclination.[13] *Gnōmē* arises when desire is oriented and established by judgment and deliberation, and it stands toward choice (*prohairesis*) as a dispositional state (*hexis*) toward the corresponding act.[14] In fact, there would seem to be little difference between the *gnomic* will and *prohairesis*, both being names for the choice that issues from, and is shaped by, *gnōmē*.[15]

Maximus' understanding of *prohairesis* as issuing from and being "shaped" by *gnōmē* (in the sense of disposition or character) raises an important question: is choice *determined* by character, or is character merely a precondition that (in the phrase of Leibniz) "inclines without necessitating"? In order to give point to this question, it may help to notice

[11] *Opusc.* 3 48A. See also *Opusc.* 3 53C and 16 192B-C, where the *gnomic* is definitive (*aphoristikon*) of person and hypostasis.

[12] *Opusc.* 14 153A-B, and equivalently, "the self-chosen impulse causing inclination toward one thing or another," 16 192B. See also the definition at *Opusc.* 26 280A: "a sort of distinguishing movement and desire for things gathered together in respect to pleasure." However, as Madden points out ("The Authenticity of Early Definitions," 63) this opusculum is of doubtful authenticity, for it contains many definitions of which Maximus elsewhere shows no knowledge.

[13] *Opusc.* 3 48A. See also the similar definition in *Opusc.* 1 as "a dispositional desire (*endiatheton orexin*) for things up to us, from which there issues *prohairesis*; that is, a disposition for things up to us that have been deliberated upon with desire" (17C). For discussion of the different meanings of *gnōmē* in Maximus, see Polycarp Sherwood, "Introduction," *St. Maximus the Confessor: The Ascetic Life, The Four Centuries on Charity* (New York: Newman Press, 1955), 58-63; Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 213-18.

[14] *Ibid.* See also the definition offered by Gauthier, "Saint Maxime," 80: "*gnōmē* is our *character* to the extent that we freely form it through our daily decisions."

[15] There are further complexities in Maximus' view of *gnomē* which I leave aside here for the sake of brevity; see the Appendix.

a couple of historical precedents. Aristotle in a famous passage of the *Nicomachean Ethics* likens the formation of character to throwing a stone:

> Once you have thrown a stone and let it go, you can no longer recall it, even though the power to throw it was yours, for the initiative was within you. Similarly, since an unjust or a self-indulgent man initially had the possibility not to become unjust or self-indulgent, he has acquired these traits voluntarily; but once he has acquired them it is no longer possible for him not to be what he is.[16]

In other words, although character may initially be formed through some sort of indeterministic process, once it is formed, choices follow from it of necessity.[17] Such a view is a version of what I will call character-based determinism, the view that choices are determined by character. A more subtle form of such a view can be found in Augustine.[18] In his view, it is not character as a whole that determines choice, but the strengths of one's loves and desires. Thus in *The City of God*, Augustine describes the soul as borne about by the preponderance of its loves much as a material body is borne about by its weight.[19] Elsewhere he states even more directly, "it is necessary that we do whatever attracts us more."[20] This too is a form of character-based determinism, although it focuses on love and desire rather than character per se.

There are a number of signs that Maximus does not hold such a view. One is the definition of *gnomic* will cited earlier, "the self-chosen impulse and movement of reasoning toward one thing or another." That the impulse is self-chosen (*authairetos*) seems to indicate a certain spontaneity that cannot be understood simply as a result of pre-existing factors.[21] This impression is confirmed by an interesting analogy Maxi-

[16] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* III.5 1114a17-21, trans. Martin Ostwald (Library of Liberal Arts).

[17] More precisely, a person of fixed character may still choose among actions, but all will be within the appropriate range prescribed by his character.

[18] Whether Augustine held this view consistently I will not attempt to say, although a number of scholars have argued that he did. See T. Kermit Scott, *Augustine: His Thought in Context* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), 188-96; Katherin Rogers, "Augustine's Compatibilism," *Religious Studies* 40 (2004), 415-35, partly incorporated in her *Anselm on Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 31-43; cf. Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1961), 134-36, 162.

[19] Augustine, *City of God* XI.28.

[20] Augustine, *Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians* 49.

[21] The use of the term *authairetos* in this context is unusual, although not unprecedented. Athenagoras says that men and angels are self-choosing with respect to virtue and vice,

mus offers in the course of explicating the difference between choice that is in accordance with nature and that contrary to nature: choice, he says, is like a vote in relation to the preceding judgment, regardless of whether that judgment is correct.[22] Here, too, there would seem to be a certain spontaneity in the act of choice that cannot be explained by preceding factors, just as a vote is not wholly explicable (although it is *partially* so) by the deliberation that precedes it.

Finally, and from a broader standpoint, there is the role Maximus gives to free choice in progress toward deification. In this context, he uses *gnōmē* precisely to indicate the creature's own contribution as distinct from that determined by God. Thus he writes in *Ambigua* 7 that "rational beings are in motion from the beginning naturally by reason of being (*dia to einai*), and toward the goal in accordance with *gnōmē* by reason of well-being (*dia to eu einai*)."[23] Likewise, in *Ambigua* 10 we read that, of the three *logoi* by which God has made all creatures—those of being, well-being, and eternal being—"the two on the extremes [i.e., being and eternal being] have God alone as cause, but the other is intermediate and depends on our own movement and *gnōmē*, and through itself makes the extremes what they are."[24] In these passages, *gnōmē* seems more likely to mean an act of choice rather than a disposition, but either way, it is plain that Maximus envisages a distinctive human contribution to the achievement of well-being, one that cannot be understood solely in terms of divine agency.[25] Here, too, it would seem that human *gnōmē* includes a crucial element of spontaneity.

authaireton kai tēn aretēn kai tēn kakian echontōn (*Legatio* 24.3), and Dionysius the Areopagite attributes to rational beings "self-directed self-determination," *hē authairetos autexousiotēs* (*Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* II.3.3 400A). Among the definitions collected in *Opuscula* 26 is one attributed to Clement of Alexandria defining *thelēsis* as *nous peri ti authairetōs kinoumenos* (276C).

[22] *Opusc.* 1 29A.

[23] *Amb.* 7 PG 91 1073C.

[24] *Amb.* 10 1116B. I take it that in saying that the *logos* of well-being "makes the extremes what they are," Maximus does not mean that it defines them—for he has just said that they have God alone as cause—but rather that it determines the degree of their actual historical embodiment. See further the description of the entry of the *logoi* of time into eternity at *Ambigua* 10 1164B-C, with my comments in "Time and Eternity in the Greek Fathers," *The Thomist* 70 (2006), 311-66, at 348-51.

[25] See further on this point John Meyendorff, "Free Will (*gnōmē*) in Saint Maximus the Confessor" in *The Ecumenical World of Orthodox Civilization*, ed. Andrew Blane (Paris and the Hague: Mouton, 1974), 71-75, although Meyendorff overstates his case by translating *gnōmē* as "free will."

This means that, in contemporary terms, Maximus is closer to being a libertarian than a compatibilist, including a theological compatibilist. However, it would not be right to identify his view simply as libertarian, for it includes an element that contemporary libertarianism normally does not—namely, the fundamental structure contained in the three *logoi* of being, well-being, and eternal being. Because human choice always takes place within this structure, it is never wholly *de novo*, but always a response to the invitation to deification present within God's creative intent. This is an important point about which I will have more to say in a moment.

First, I would like to return to the question of the place of Maximus within the history of the development of concepts of the will. Gauthier argues for the importance of Maximus in this regard primarily on Maximus' identification of the natural will as a faculty that: (1) is innate to human nature, (2) must be distinguished sharply from the manner of use of that faculty, i.e., the gnomic will, and (3) is intrinsically directed toward things that are "in accordance with nature."

Here points (1) and (2) are, as Gauthier sees it, perhaps the inevitable result of Maximus' two-fold aim of establishing that Christ possessed a human will but not a will subject to sin.[26] But nothing constrained Maximus to add point (3), the intrinsic directedness of the natural will toward natural goods. In doing so, he opened up, as it were, a kind of rationality that is independent of reasoning or consciousness. The presence of such a prediscursive rationality is something that the scholastics—who were influenced by Maximus via the mediation of John of Damascus—rightly recognized as integral to human nature. As Gauthier puts it:

> Natural will is without a doubt the wish [*boulēsis*] of Aristotle. But instead of making this wish arise, as does Aristotle, upon the indifferent foundation of desire, St. Maximus... makes it arise in the *thelēsis*, a word that Aristotle did not know just as he did not know the reality that it designates. *Thelēsis* is no longer a desire that is rational by accident, but a desire rational by nature, a faculty (*dunamis*) moved by its own proper vitality, prior to any intervention of knowledge, toward the same universal natural good that it is the function of reason to know. This faculty belongs to human nature, and it is natural too that there arises in it, whenever a simple repre-

[26] Gauthier and Jolif, *Aristote: l'Éthique à Nicomaque*, 263.

> sentation occurs, independently of any deliberation, the act of wish [*boulēsis*], thus elevated for the first time to the dignity of the will.[27]

Gauthier adds that there is a direct correlation between the natural will of Maximus and the *voluntas* of the scholastics, understood as a faculty of rational appetite that is distinct from reason, on the one hand, and sensible appetite, on the other.[28]

These interesting remarks have unfortunately not received the attention that they deserve. I am aware of only two published responses. Thomas Madden cites Gauthier with agreement and offers on his own account a similar view, although he sees Aristotelian *prohairesis*, rather than *boulēsis*, as the closest precedent for *thelēsis*. As Madden sees it, Maximus'

> master-stroke was to seize upon the verb root *thelō* as the basis for his concept. In doing so, he leapt back over all classical philosophy to a root whose spontaneous, immediate, para-rational efficacity was well known to Homer as well as to the translators of the LXX, the writers of the New Testament, and the early Fathers of the Church. This root provided solid ground—perhaps the only possible ground in the Greek vocabulary—for a faculty which would stand co-equal to intellect, yet independent of it.[29]

The other response is that of Richard Sorabji, who takes a more critical view. Sorabji summarizes the claims made by Gauthier and Madden under two points:

(1) Maximus rightly defined the natural will as "a faculty directed of its essence to the good, rather than as something one calls 'will' when it happens to be so directed";

(2) "the will aims at this good quite independently of reason, although reason recognizes the same good."[30]

[27] *Ibid.*, 263-64 (words in brackets are my addition; "souhait" is Gauthier's normal translation for *boulēsis*).

[28] *Ibid.*, 262. Gauthier's odd remark that Aristotelian *boulēsis* arises "upon the indifferent foundation of desire" requires some explanation, for *boulēsis* is if course a function of the rational part of the soul and responds to the intellect's apprehension of the good. Presumably Gauthier has in mind Aristotle's assignment of *boulēsis* to one branch of *to orektikon* (above, n. 6); however, this does not clearly distinguish it from *thelēsis*, which after all is defined by Maximus as a type of *orexis*. Fortunately the rest of the passage is more acute.

[29] Madden, "The Authenticity of Early Definitions," 78-79.

[30] Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, 337-38.

Neither point, according to Sorabji, justifies attributing to Maximus any significant role in the development of the concept of the will. The first is not particularly original, for the belief that there is a "naturally directed desire for the good" was common in ancient thought and can be found, for example, in Aristotle's view that everyone naturally desires a happy life. In fact, Sorabji argues, Maximus' definition of natural will would seem to be an adaptation of the Stoic notion of *oikeiōsis*, "that attachment that is felt by newborn infants and animals to their own physical constitution (*sustasis*), and which the adult human can later extend to his entire rational constitution."[31] In support, Sorabji points to a number of verbal parallels between Stoic descriptions of *oikeiōsis* and Maximus' definition.[32] The second point can be dismissed even more briefly, for to be independent of reason "is not a universally agreed feature of the will" and so is irrelevant to Sorabji's ostensible topic, that of the "discovery" of the will.[33]

It seems to me that Sorabji here runs roughshod over what are, in fact, some valuable insights. The connection of Maximus' natural will to Stoic *oikeiōsis* is by no means as clear as Sorabji suggests.[34] More importantly, for Maximus it is crucial that the natural will is a faculty (*dunamis*), and this is what distinguishes his view from that of others, such as Aristotle and the Stoics, who recognize some sort of naturally directed desire for the good. As Gauthier emphasizes, it is crucial that the natural will be a faculty in order for it to be capable of motivating action in a way that is rational but not determined by reasoning. This is a point that Sorabji ignores.

Although I find the reference to *oikeiōsis* unhelpful, I do think that something more can be said about what motivated Maximus to

[31] *Ibid.*, 338.

[32] They include that what is said to be preserved is one's *sustasis* or constitution, that the will is *sunektikē* of that constitution, and that what it holds together are the *idiōmata*, "the attributes which the Stoics postulated as lasting through an individual's life and distinguishing it from all other individuals" (*ibid.*).

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] The verbal evidence is not particularly impressive, for *sustasis*, *sunektikē*, and *idiōmata* were by the time of Maximus common terms with no particular Stoic associations. Furthermore, Maximus' use of *idiōmata* is different from that of the Stoics, for he refers to the characteristic properties of a given nature rather than an individual. For the commonness of these terms, see the entries in Lampe's *Patristic Greek Lexicon*: almost three columns for the first, more than half for the second, and more than two for the third!

identify the natural will as a faculty and that doing so may help to bring this idea into focus. As I mentioned earlier, the monothelite debate was a continuation of the monoenergist debate, and in fact, Maximus often addresses the two issues in tandem. Now it had long been traditional to see *energeia* as the expression of *dunamis*, an Aristotelian idea that had been codified into the tripartite scheme of *ousia-dunamis-energeia* by Galen, Iamblichus, and others, and would have been known to Maximus through Nemesius of Emessa.[35] In light of this correlation, the debate over whether Christ possessed a natural human *energeia* was also, by implication, a debate over whether He possessed a natural human *dunamis*. But, as Pyrrhus remarks in the *Disputation*—and Maximus accepts—to will (*thelein*) is a kind of "synecdoche" for to act (*energein*), since willing is itself a kind of activity.[36] It was therefore natural for Maximus, approaching the issue of whether Christ possessed a natural human will, to identify that will as a *dunamis* that is correlative to the human *energeia*. I admit that this hypothesis is speculative, as Maximus himself does not explicitly draw these connections, but it seems the most likely explanation for how he came to be the first in the history of philosophy to identify the natural will as a kind of *dunamis*.

So there is more to be said for the first point of Gauthier and Madden than Sorabji allows. Sorabji dismisses the second point – that will aims at the good in a way independent of reason – by observing that it is not part of the concept of the will as such. When the issue is posed in this narrow way, Sorabji is certainly correct. However, Gauthier and Madden plainly did not mean to claim that all subsequent thought on the will has followed Maximus' lead; their claim is rather that Maximus' concept of the will is correct, or, at least, a significant advance upon its predecessors.

This is a philosophical issue that it is hardly possible to settle here. Nonetheless, I would like to point out how the element of spontaneity

[35] Admittedly, Nemesius, because he is discussing intentional action, speaks here of *praxis* rather than *energeia*. See Nemesius of Emesa, *On the Nature of Man* 34, terminology echoed by Maximus at *Opusc.* 1 33A-B; and for the earlier history of the triad see my *Aristotle East and West: Metaphysics and the Division of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 57-59, 63-64, 136.

[36] *Pyrr.* 333C.

in Maximus' understanding of choice, to which I drew attention earlier, strengthens Gauthier's and Madden's point. One of the difficulties facing Medieval discussions of the will was that of how reason can be *operative* in choice without *determining* choice. Thomas Aquinas, for example, famously suggested that reason moves the will by presenting to it its final cause, "because the understood good is the object of the will, and moves it as an end."[37] It is natural to wonder, if this is so, whether the will is determined by the conclusions of reason; and, if it is so determined, whether it is truly free. It was presumably such worries that prompted the bishop of Paris to include, among the propositions condemned in 1277, the following: "That the will necessarily pursues what is firmly held by reason, and that it cannot abstain from that which reason dictates" (no. 163), and, "That if reason is rectified, the will is also rectified" (no. 166).[38] The condemnation of these two propositions, as is well known, did much to contribute to the rise of Medieval voluntarism.

Yet if the will is *not* determined by reason, then how can we avoid positing it simply as a capacity for deciding arbitrarily among alternatives? Such a view leads to at least two significant worries. One is that it makes the acts of will arbitrary, and thus unintelligible. The other is that it makes them not truly free, for we normally think of someone as acting freely precisely when his reasons can be understood. If it turns out that free choice is instead simply a random process operating in the mind, then it would seem that we are at the mercy of that random process, rather than free agents. This was in essence the reply of the Medieval intellectualists to the voluntarists, as it is the reply today of compatibilists to libertarians.

It is in light of this debate that I find Maximus' treatment of free choice particularly intriguing. Maximus places choice in the sequence of mental operations *after* deliberation and judgment, so that it is informed by the operations of reason. Yet it is not determined by them;

[37] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, Q. 82, art. 4.

[38] The numbering is that of P. Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant et l'averroïsme latin au XIIIme siècle, 2me partie, Textes inédites*, Second Edition (Louvain: Institut supérieur de philosophie de l'Université, 1908); the translation is by E.L. Fortin and P.D. O'Neill as printed in Arthur Hyman and James J. Walsh, eds., *Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1977), 590.

for, as I mentioned earlier, it operates like a "vote" in relation to the results of judgment; that is, the will takes these results into account while also deciding from within, through its own spontaneous movement, whether to accept them. Yet this movement is not arbitrary, for it is an expression of the will's intrinsic orientation toward goods that are in accordance with nature. Of course, it does not follow that the choice itself is in accordance with nature—far from it!—but it is at least intelligible as an expression of this innate desire.

Granted, any form of spontaneity always leaves a further question of "why?"—in this case, why does the will express its innate desire in one way rather than another? I suspect that Maximus, if faced with this question, might refer us to his teaching regarding the divine *logoi* and the ultimate human destiny of deification. As destined for deification, human beings *must* be spontaneous originators of their own character because otherwise they would not share in that aspect of the divine nature that the Greek Fathers called *to autexousion*, self-determination. This does not render each choice in isolation fully intelligible, but it does render intelligible why our acts of seeking to understand choice reach a limit. We find in ourselves an image of the same mystery that we find in God; and this is, if not understanding, then something far better.

APPENDIX

The main body of the paper describes what I take to be the predominant line of Maximus' thought on the will. Under the pressure of his debate with the monothelites, Maximus also offers a different and more restrictive understanding of three of the key terms—*gnomic* will, *gnōmē*, and *prohairesis*—that should also be noted. In the *Disputation with Pyrrhus* he defines *gnōmē* as "a sort of act of will (*poia thelēsis*) relative to some real or perceived good," one that "judges between opposites, inquires about things unknown, and deliberates about that which is unclear."[39] *Gnōmē* here is not a disposition, but instead an act much like *boulēsis* and *prohairesis* (or perhaps, given the breadth of the description, a way of naming the entire act of which *boulēsis* and *pro-*

[39] *Pyrr.*. 308C, 329D.

hairesis are stages). To attribute *gnōmē* in this sense to Christ would render him, according to Maximus, "a mere man, deliberating as we do, being ignorant and doubting, and possessing opposite tendencies," and indeed would imply that he is sinful insofar as he lacks a clear knowledge of the good.[40] *Gnōmē* and, *a fortiori*, *gnomic* will must therefore on no account be attributed to Christ. Elsewhere, Maximus amplifies and extends this position, arguing that *prohairesis* too is of necessity a choice between good and evil, and so must be denied of Christ.[41]

It is important to note that these statements rest upon a different understanding of *gnōmē* and *prohairesis* than that which Maximus offers when he is defining these terms in a non-polemical way. *Gnōmē* as it is defined in *Opuscula* 1 is a standing inclination or state of character that has been formed through judgment and deliberation. Deliberation is, in turn, merely "desire that is inquisitive (*zētikēn*) regarding some act that is up to us."[42] Granted that deliberation implies a state of uncertainty about what to do, it does not imply ignorance of the good, for the issue deliberated may be a choice among different paths, *all of which are good*. Likewise *prohairesis*, understood simply as desire following upon deliberation and judgment, need not be a choice between good and evil, but may instead be a choice among different goods. As Demetrios Bathrellos has noted, Maximus seems to have been motivated to deny *gnomic* will, *gnōmē*, and *prohairesis* to Christ by the fact that the Monothelites had chosen these terms to describe Christ's alleged single will, and Maximus wanted to deny them this possibility.[43] Despite this act of polemical exuberance, he does not in fact seem to wish to deny to Christ *prohairesis* in the broader sense of a choice among goods, as would indeed be highly implausible given the exigencies of human existence.[44] In particular, that Christ's human will exercises *prohairesis* understood as a choice among goods would seem to be implied by Maximus' exegesis of the prayer at Gethsemane: for Maximus this prayer exhibits a movement *within* Christ's human

[40] *Ibid.* 308D, 329D.

[41] *Opusc.* 1 28D-32B, 3 53C, 7 81D.

[42] *Opusc.* 1 16B.

[43] Bathrellos, *Byzantine Christ*, 151-52. As Bathrellos notes (150-51), in works written before the monothelite controversy, Maximus freely attributed *gnōmē* and *prohairesis* to Christ.

[44] See Bathrellos, *Byzantine Christ*, 151 n.302, 191.

will, one in which the human will, being "moved and shaped" by the divine will, comes to accept the good of the cup offered by the Father rather than the good of continuing earthly life.[45]

I would also add that, within a broader perspective, the attempt to limit *prohairesis* to choice between good and evil is decidedly eccentric. Earlier Fathers as authoritative as St. Athanasius, St. Basil the Great, and St. Gregory of Nyssa had found no difficulty in attributing *prohairesis* to God himself acting in his divine nature. Divine choice enters Athanasius' *Orations against the Arians* in his response to the dilemma posed by the Arians regarding whether the Father begot the Son by will (*boulēsis*) or by necessity. In reply, Athanasius posits an analogy: just as God is good neither by necessity nor by will, but by nature, so likewise He is Father of the Son neither by necessity nor by will, but by nature. Crucially, the reason that God is not good "by will" is that "to counsel and choose implies an inclination two ways" (*to bouleuesthai kai prohairesthai eis hekatera tēn rhopēn echei*), so that if He is good by will, He could also *not* be good.[46] This shows plainly enough that Athanasius understands the divine will as embracing the capacity for opposites. As regards creation, Basil in his *Hexaemeron* rejects the idea that God created the world "without choice (*aprohairetōs*), as the body is the cause of shadow and light the cause of brightness," and Gregory in *On the Soul and Resurrection* similarly attributes creation to "the impulse of divine choice" (*hē hormē tēs theias prohaireseōs*).[47] Similarly, in discussing the Trinity in his *Great Catechism*, Gregory observes that both the divine Logos and the Holy Spirit possess a faculty of choice (*prohairetikēn dunamin*) since no living thing is without choice (*aprohaireton*).[48] In all of these texts

[45] *Opusc.* 3 48C-49A, 6 65A-68D, *Pyrr.* 297A-300A; cf. the helpful discussion in Ian A. McFarland, "'Naturally and by Grace': Maximus the Confessor on the Operation of the Will," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 58 (2005), 410-33, at 424-26.

[46] Athanasius, *Orations against the Arians* III.62 (PG 26 453C; NPNF vol. 4, 428). See also the classic article by Fr. Georges Florovsky, "St. Athanasius' Concept of Creation," *Studia Patristica* 6 (1962), 36-57, reprinted in his *Aspects of Church History* (Belmont, Mass.: Nordland, 1975), 39-62.

[47] Basil, *Hexaemeron* I.7 (PG 29 17C); Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Soul and Resurrection* (PG 46 124B).

[48] Gregory of Nyssa, *Great Catechism* 1 (PG 45 13D), 2 (17B). "Living thing" here is *zōion*, a term that excludes plants. For further discussion of these and related passages, see my "Divine Freedom in the Greek Patristic Tradition," *Quaestiones Disputatae* 2 (2011), 56-69.

there is plainly no suggestion that God chooses between good and evil, but only that he chooses among goods.

For all of these reasons, it would seem that Maximus' denial of *gnōmē*, *gnomic* will, and *prohairesis* to Christ must be understood strictly within its polemical context. For our purpose here, that of understanding Maximus' theory of the will as a contribution to the history of philosophy, it is best to ignore such complications and to focus on those aspects of the theory that are not aimed solely at denying that Christ possesses a *gnomic* will.[49]

[49] A slightly different version of this paper is published in *A Saint for East and West: Maximus the Confessor*, ed. Daniel Haynes (Wipf and Stock, 2013). It is included here by permission of Wipf and Stock Publishers. www.wipfandstock.com.

The Dialectic of Communion and Otherness in St Maximus' Understanding of the Will

John Panteleimon Manoussakis

Within the controversy that ensued as a result of the Council of Chalcedon's definition of Christ as one Person in two natures, united "without division and without confusion," St Maximus the Confessor found himself confronted with the problem of the will in a way that was perhaps unprecedented in the history of philosophy. In spite of Aristotle's preliminary treatment in the *Nichomachean Ethics*, the problem of the will was not posed as a subject that deserved its own systematic and theoretical consideration before St Augustine, who is forced to look at the enigma of willing first in its existential intensity, as recounted by his *Confessions*, and later, in the anti-Pelagian controversy, as a theological problem that implicates the Church's doctrine on anthropology, soteriology, and the sacraments.[1]

Recent scholarship on the theology of St Maximus traces the basic frame of the development of his thought on the subject of the will with

[1] For Augustine as "the first philosopher of the Will" see the testimony of Hannah Arendt in her magisterial treatment of the philosophical history of the will in the second volume of *The Life of the Mind* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), pp. 84-110. The same conclusion is reached by Richard Sorabji, after analyzing and acknowledging the contributions of Neo-Pythagoreans, Platonists, the Stoics, the Epicureans, and Plotinus ("I have ascribed to *Augustine* the originality of bringing all the criteria [of the concept of will] together.") In "The Concept of the Will from Plato to Maximus the Confessor" in *The Will and Human Action*, Thomas Pink and M.W.F. Stone (eds.) (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 6-28, at 22. In the same essay he denies, a little hastily perhaps, that St Maximus ought to be credited with any original contribution on the subject.

Letter 2 (to John Cubicularius) and the exposition on the *Our Father*, to the works he produced during his exile in the West, such as the *Ambigua*, the *Dispute with Pyrrhus*, and the polemical *Opuscula* written during the peak of the monothelitic controversy. It is believed that St Maximus begun with two concepts, that of will and nature, which he sometimes contrasted to each other—for nature unites while the will divides[2]—in order to refine further his terminology as to include two conceptions of willing, one natural (θέλημα φυσικόν), the other associated with one's character or person (θέλημα γνωμικόν).[3] The distinction between two wills came as a result of the dialectic between nature and will.

1. The Dialectic of Nature and Will

If for Augustine, in light of his polemic against Pelagius, the problem of the will is contrasted to that of God's grace, for Maximus the same problem is formulated primarily as a question vis-à-vis nature, for he was writing against the backdrop of the Christological controversies on the two natures of the incarnate Logos. In attempting to answer the question

[2] Maximus sees the result of the human Fall as manifested first and foremost in the fact that the devil "has separated us in our inclinations [κατὰ τὴν γνώμην] from God and from one another...and divided nature at the level of mode of existence [κατὰ τὸν τρόπον], fragmenting it into a multitude of opinions and imaginations" (396 D). That separation, he now more explicitly states, was "because of man's own *will*" (κατὰ τὴν θέλησιν μέν ἰδίαν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, 397B, my emphasis). Thus "...the contention and division [of inclination: γνώμης] remains irreconcilable with nature...dividing nature into many parts" (400C-D). It is precisely in these terms of division and unity that the grand narrative of *Ep. 2* casts itself in order to explain the scattering of man into multiplicity and God's work of gathering humanity again into the union achieved by love (PG 91, column numbers as given above; English translation by Andrew Louth in *Maximus the Confessor* [London and New York: Routledge, 1996], pp. 84-93). Notice here that Maximus contrasts to nature (φύσις) interchangeably two terms that signify volition: θέλησις and γνώμη. The distinction between the two had not, by that time, been yet developed.

[3] Ian A. McFarland, "'Naturally and by Grace': Maximus the Confessor on the Operation of the Will" in *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 58:4, (2005): 410-433. It is difficult to render Maximus' phrase θέλημα γνωμικόν in English: "deliberation" (or "deliberative will") and "personal will" are approximations that could, however, create more confusion than clarify Maximus' phrase: in light of Maximus' emphatic position that no γνωμικόν θέλημα can be found in Christ, the rendition "personal will" would seem to imply that Christ lacks a personal will, forcing us to imagine a Christ without volition. Thus, I will simply leave the Greek adjective untranslated and transliterate it as "*gnomic* will." It should also be noted that in the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, it is Maximus himself who criticizes the expression "*gnomic* will," suggested by the monothelyte opponent of Maximus, as "a category error" for *gnōmē* itself is a concept that implies will (θέλημα). See, PG 91, 308D and Thomas A. Watts' "Two Wills in Christ?" in *Westminster Theological Journal*, 71 (2009):468, note 68.

whether the will is natural and by nature or rather a characteristic that emerges beyond nature, we should first establish a fourfold distinction among: a) the agent of will ("who wills?"); b) the object of willing ("what is willed?"); c) the manner in which one wills, and d) the will itself. The faculty of will, that is, the capacity to will, cannot but belong to the human nature insofar it is a human ability in general. Similarly, the object of will, the goal or the aim of my willing, is also determined by human nature, especially as, in its fallen condition, nature can lead me away from God's will.[4] However, as soon as we posit the question of the "who," we are already transported beyond nature toward the particular subject, the hypostasized agent of willing, that is, to a person. The subject of will is always a person.[5] To say, as we do, that no will is un-assumed by a hypostasis does not amount to the principle: "as many wills so many willing persons." In other words, to insist that a will is always that of willing person does not fall into the error of affirming two persons in Christ because of His two wills: both wills, divine and human, are enhypostasized in the person of Christ, for He is the willing Person of both. We cannot attribute the act of willing to an impersonal entity or to an abstract concept. John Macquarrie suggests that the perplexity on this point is created by the metaphysical constitution of language itself that misleads us into (mis-)taking an *abstractum* for a *concretum*. Thus he raises a legitimate objection worth quoting, even if we are not willing to follow him to the conclusions he draws as a result of this objection:

> [They] proceeded on the false assumption that there is a faculty or organ of the mind called the "will" which has the function of making decisions. This misleading idea may have arisen because many languages have a noun (will, *voluntas*, *thelema*, etc.) which might seem to indicate some distinct "thing-like" part of our mental or spiritual equipment. But a little reflection on the use of language shows that the "will" is nothing but the activity of willing, and this is an activity of the whole person. The will is simply the self in action.[6]

[4] Or so it would seem. As we will see later, St Maximus seems to argue that nature cannot move astray from what God has willed for each thing inasmuch as He is the author of that movement, and that, therefore, it is rather our *gnōmē* that should be held responsible for our possibility for sin. More on this below.

[5] See, *Amb.*, PG 91, 1261D, as well as Metropolitan John's (Zizioulas) "Person and Nature in the Theology of St Maximus the Confessor" (in this volume).

[6] John Macquarrie, *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought* (London: SCM, 1990), 166-7. For a discussion of Macquarrie's objection, see Thomas A. Watts' "Two Wills in Christ?" in *WTJ*, pp. 455-7.

Therefore, it is only the person who wills and the phenomenon of will in general becomes manifest in the "I will" that man utters. Yet, we are not all humans indistinguishable when it comes to our will. Even if we ascribe the same will—both as capacity and as object—to every human being, not every human wills what we will in the same way. *How* we go about actualizing our desire is, undoubtedly, differentiated from person to person, and it is this differentiation that distinguishes us from each other. Therefore, both the subject of willing and the mode of its actualization take us beyond nature to the realm of the person. And the person is *not* his or her nature.[7]

This transition is significant, for soon it is transformed into a tension between nature and will. As long as we speak about nature we speak about a universal, about a whatness, without consideration, whether that of which we speak exists or not. Thus, our discussion remains inherently abstract. Yet, even as such, it presupposes a familiarity with the phenomenon of the will, without which it could not have made the will the object of a discussion, unless it was revealed to us by existence itself. As soon, therefore, as we enter the existential field, as we are compelled to do, we cannot any longer talk about such abstractions as the human nature, but only of particular human beings; we cannot any longer treat the will as a universal capacity, but rather we are confronted with the enigma of the "I will" in all its dramatic intension as it was articulated in the well-known passage from the *Epistle to the Romans*:

> I do not know what I do. For I don't do that which I will, but I do that which I hate. And if I do what I don't want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer myself, but the sin that dwells in me who does it. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For I find the will with me, but doing what is good I find not. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I don't want to do—this I keep on doing. Now, if I do what I don't want to do, it is no longer I, but the sin that dwells in me who does it. (7:16-20)[8]

[7] "Now we do not identify created things with their natures; *human nature is not a man*." *Summa Theologiae*, Ia, 3,3 (my emphasis). It is of importance to recall at this point the insight of St Thomas Aquinas: "This flesh and these bones and the properties peculiar to them belong indeed to this man, but not to his nature. An individual man then possesses something which his human nature does not, so that a man and his nature are not altogether the same thing. 'Human nature' names, in fact, the formative element in man; for what gives a thing definition is formative with respect to the matter which gives it individuality" (Ibid.).

[8] Rom. 7:14-20; NIV translation, substantially revised.

It was this very passage that set St Augustine on his long and arduous way of re-examining his anti-Manichean affirmation of a free will.[9] The agony expressed in this passage, even to the point of paroxysm, reflected best in the very syntax of the text, is indicative of the experience of finding oneself at odds with oneself. The crux of the problem lies in the second half of verse 18. We do possess the ability to will (what, confusingly, is called "free will"), but already this will is determined to do "that which I hate," i.e., sin (therefore, my will is not free after all). My inability not-to-sin (*non posse non peccare*) is not the result of ignorance, for I *know* the good that I want, I even *want* it, but of my will's inability to execute it ("but doing what is good I find not"). The name that St Paul gives to this inability is "sin." Here "sin" refers primarily to the cause and only subsequently to the result. It is "sin" that causes me to sin. Sin begets sin. To put it differently, if I sin, if I am able to sin at present or with regards to this or that, that is because I have already sinned. "The sin that dwells in me" already prefigures the notion of *original sin*, that is, a sin ancestral of sin, the first sin by which all subsequent sins and sinning itself was made possible.[10]

The experience, however, described in the passage quoted from the *Epistle to the Romans* is the perplexity one finds oneself in by realizing that what one supposed to be one and whole is in fact perceived by the self itself as two, as the splitting into two, *a division that continuously takes place within oneself*. We need to be careful at this point: the passage speaks at the same time of both a unity and a division within that unity. If the division was not within the unity of oneself, there would have been no perplexity, indeed, no pain. It is not, in other words, a battle between two individuals that concerns us here, nor is it a battle between two distinct, separate forces or realities. Rather what we have here is a self that becomes aware of itself as that division between two qualities that are equally itself. St. Paul speaks, for example, of two laws,

[9] The turning point marked by Augustine's answers to Ambrose's successor, Simplicianus (*Miscellany of Questions in Response to Simplician I*, in *Selected Writing on Grace and Pelagianism*, translated by Roland Teske, S.J., (New York: New City Press, 2011, pp. 33-69).

[10] One should follow this idea all the way to its fullest articulation by Kierkegaard who, delighting as always in a good paradox, never tired of affirming that "the first sin is the sin" (p. 30), and "[t]hrough the first sin, sin came into the world" (p. 31), and that "sin presupposes itself" (p. 32): in *The Concept of Anxiety*, translated by Reidar Thomte (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

one seen in "his members," the other in his "mind" or "after the inward man." Both, however, are his; they are him.

How could we otherwise explain man's differentiation from his will which this passage describes, if the will becomes one and undifferentiated with man's nature? And doesn't this differentiation constitute my freedom, a freedom either *for* sin or *from* sin? Is man's freedom to be understood with respect to his nature, to his will, or both? Whence is human freedom? Our experience of our fallen condition makes it hardly possible to talk of a freedom according to nature: I cannot chose to eat, since I cannot chose not to eat without suffering the consequences of my nature—there is, indeed, a certain violence in nature.[11] I can chose what to eat (relative freedom of choice), but I can also chose to abstain from food (fasting), sleep (vigil), and every other biological compulsion that my nature imposes on me. If the will is to be understood only as a natural activity, how can I resist the compulsion of the will itself? How can I ascend to the other's will in saying "your will be done"? Could a nature oppose what is natural, and could nature fight against nature? Whence is man's freedom? On the other hand, if one is to be identified completely with one's nature, then why do you punish them or award them? To ascribe the will to nature, without reference to the human person, would threaten the entire spiritual ethos of the Church.

Christ's salvific work, even though it can be said that it had as its aim the restoration of human nature, or rather, precisely because of that aim, did not operate in accordance with our nature: from His birth to His death, Christ acts according to the freedom underscored by the will, free from the compulsion of the human nature. "The mystery of the salvation," writes St Maximus, is brought about "by things that were willed, and not by the things found under the tyranny [of nature]."[12] Employing the language of one of Maximus' early triads—God, nature, and world—we could say that the mystery of the Incarnation was God's ruse in order to attract man to Himself and thus away from both nature and the world. In *Letter 9* (to Thalassius), Maximus conceives motion, a subject that would become of paramount importance in the development of his thought, as bringing man toward one of the terms of this triad. Man's

[11] With reference to our need of the "daily bread," St Maximus speaks of "the violence of nature" (διὰ τὴν βίαν τῆς φύσεως), *Or. Dom.*, PG 90, 904A.

[12] Βουλομένων γάρ, οὐ τυραννουμένων τὸ τῆς σωτηρίας μυστήριον, *Or. Dom.*, PG 90, 880B.

movement, however, is also a change into becoming by position (θέσει) what that, to which he is attracted, is by nature (φύσει). The attractions, and the corresponding movements, are mutually exclusive: both God and the world pull man away from nature, and nature, in turn, as the middle term (μεθόριος) between these two extremes, allows man neither to (re-)turn to God, nor to descend to the world.[13] It is this conception that affords Maximus the daring conclusion that the goal of God is "to free man from both the world and nature."[14]

Therefore, the attempt to ascribe will in all its complexity to nature alone is a futile endeavor, since we can speak of a will only insofar as there is a willing one, as we can speak of a human nature only insofar as we speak of a particular human being. By granting again priority to the essence over the person and, therefore, sacrificing the personal characteristics of the will, allowing it to sink back to the anonymity of nature, do not we lead theology back to her Platonic captivity from which the Greek Fathers, and especially St Maximus the Confessor, worked so hard to liberate her?[15]

2. The Confessor and the *Confessions*

Maximus differentiation between a natural will and, what he called, a *gnomic* Will has caused to his readers some considerable difficulty, and we will examine only an aspect of the relationship between the two in the section to follow. First of all, however, we need to ask what prompted St Maximus to introduce that differentiation, by positing the question of whether the will is a characteristic of nature or of something

[13] Αἱ οὐν ἀκρότητες, Θεὸν δὲ φημι καὶ κόσμον, ἀλλήλων καὶ τῆς μεσότητος, λέγω δὲ τὴν φύσιν, ἀπάγειν τὸν ἄνθρωπον εἰώθασιν. Ἡ δὲ μεσότης, τούτων οὖσα μεθόριος...οὔτε πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν αὐτὸν ἀναδραμεῖν συγχωροῦσα, καὶ πρὸς τὸν κόσμον ἀφιέναι καταπεσεῖν αἰδουμένη (PG 91:446D-448A).

[14] Σκοπὸς γὰρ τῷ δοτῆρι τῶν ἐντολῶν, κόσμου καὶ φύσεως ἐλευθερῶσαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον (PG 91: 448C).

[15] There are further, particular disturbing, implications of the identification between nature and the will. If we were to transport the discussion from anthropology to God proper, then, we would be forced to accept the identity between begetting and proceeding, on the one hand, and creating, on the other, since it could be said that the Father begets the Son *voluntarily* and creates the world *naturally* (on the basis of the assumed identity between nature and will). Then, Arianism would triumph once again, since it would not be possible to distinguish between the relation of the Father and Son and the relation of the Creator and His creation, thanks to a failure in differentiating properly between will and nature. Thus, a twofold absurdity would have to ensue: either the Son would be created or creation, as proceeding from the natural and necessary Will of God, uncreated.

that transcends the natural. This question seeks to trap us in an either/or which St Maximus successfully and prudently avoids by distinguishing between two conceptions of the will: one that he ascribes to the human nature as such (and, in fact, to every nature, but we would limit our discussion here only with regards to humanity) and the other that he reserves for the mode according to which that nature is exercised by each particular person. That the result is a doubling of the will should not disturb us, for by positing two wills, and thereby the possibility of a conflict as well as an accord between the two, St Maximus offers us the possibility of taking into account sufficiently the experience that lies behind the passage from the *Epistle to Romans* cited above (7:16-20). His theory of two wills can now account for the reality of sin as well as the possibility for salvation.

No other literary passage has illustrated the theory of two wills more memorably than the eighth book of the *Confessions* that narrates the famous moment of St Augustine's conversion in the garden at Milan. Even though the question on whether or not St Maximus knew of St Augustine's work has not yet yielded any satisfactory results, we are allowed perhaps to let the work of the bishop of Hippo shed its light on the thought of the Byzantine Confessor.[16]

In his own rendering of Romans 7:16-25, St Augustine writes:

> To find my delight in your law as far as my inmost self was concerned was of no profit to me when a different law in my bodily members was warring against the law of my mind, imprisoning me under the law of sin which held sway in my lower self. For the law of sin is that brute force of habit whereby the mind is dragged along and held fast against its will, and deservedly so because it slipped into the habit willingly. In my wretched state, who was there to free me from this death-doomed body, save your grace through Jesus Christ our Lord?[17]

[16] On this question, see George C. Berthold, "Did Maximus the Confessor Know Augustine?" in *Studia Patristica*, 19:1 (1982), pp. 14-17; and more recently, Brian E. Daley, S.J., "Making a Human Will Divine: Augustine and Maximus on Christ and Human Salvation" in Papanikolaou and Demacopoulos (eds.), *Orthodox Readings of Augustine* (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2008), pp. 101-126.

[17] Augustine, *The Confessions*, VIII, 5. 12., translated by Maria Boulding, O.S.B. (New York: New City Press, 1997), p. 194. Pauline terminology suggesting a rebellion of bodily members and "the law of sin in my members" are particularly apt here, given Augustine's struggle against habits formed by a licentious sexuality.

Corresponding to the two selves are an equal number of *voluntates*, two wills fighting each other: "the old and the new, the one carnal the other spiritual—and in their struggle tore [his] soul apart."[18] Augustine's agony in what is undoubtedly his personal Gethsemane is caused by two wills driven toward different ends—his conversion would amount to nothing less than bringing the one in agreement with the other, that is, in his will's self-surrender to God's, in saying, like Christ, "yet not as I will, but as you will" (Mt. 26:39). Had St Maximus read the *Confessions*, he would have recognized that what is at stake in St Augustine's struggle is not much different than what he had understood to be the case in the Lord's prayer before His passion, namely, the self-surrendering of His human will to His Divine—so Augustine's conversion constitutes at the same time a unification of his *gnomic* will to his natural will as it was ordered by God and toward God.[19] Yet, please notice, this unification, if it is to be achieved, can be brought about only by the

[18] Ibid. VIII, 5. 10, p. 193.

[19] For the Maximian reading of Mt. 26:39 see, *Opusc.* 6, PG 91, 65A-68D, (English translation by Paul M. Blowers and Robert Louis Wilken in *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ*, [Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003], pp. 173-176) and *Opusc.* 7, PG 91, 69B-89B (English translation by Andrew Louth in *Maximus the Confessor*, pp. 180-191), and François-Marie Léthel, *Théologie de l'agonie du Christ* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1979). Of key importance here is also the following passage from *Amb.* 7 (PG 91:10761-b): "And this will take place because that which is within our power, I mean our free will—through which death made its entry among us, and confirmed at our expense the power of corruption—will have surrendered voluntarily and wholly to God, and perfectly subjected itself to His rule, by eliminating any wish that might contravene His will. And this is precisely why the Savior, exemplifying within Himself our condition, says to the Father: *Yet not as I will, but as thou wilt*" (translation by Nicholas Constas from *Maximos the Confessor, The Ambigua to Thomas and the Ambigua to John*, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013]). St Augustine, too, saw in Christ's agony in Gethsemane the prefiguration and inclusion of all those Christians who would strive to unite the two wills, so in *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 93.19 he writes: "How did our Lord marry two wills so that they become one in the humanity he bore? In his body, the Church, there would be some people who, after wanting to do their own will, would later follow the will of God. The Lord prefigured these people in himself. He wanted to show that though they are weak, they still belong to him, and so he represented them in advance in his own person. He sweated blood from his whole body, as a sign that the blood of martyrs would gush from his body, the Church....He revealed the human will that was in him, but if he had continued to insist on that will, he would have seemed to display perversity of heart. If you recognize that he has had compassion on you, and is setting you free in himself, imitate the next prayer he made: 'Yet not what I will, but what you will be done, Father'" (*Expositions to the Psalms*, The Works of Saint Augustine, III/18, translation Maria Boulding, O.S.B., [New York: New City Press, 2002], p. 395).

gnomic will.[20] That there are *not* two natures here at fight, an evil one against a good one, is made emphatically clear in *Confessions* VIII, 10. 22. For St Augustine, ever conscious of the lurking dangers of Manichaeism, the natural capacity to will, though tainted by Adam's sin, could not be anything else but good. The will's resistance to itself and its subsequent splitting into two opposing wills—this monstrosity (*hoc monstrum*—repeated four times in the space of a short paragraph) is only the result of a will which, bedazzled by its own alleged freedom—the *posse peccare* of the second book's Edenesque garden of stolen pears—moved steadily away from God and, at the same time, away from its own nature.

In the dramatic description of the two wills, St Augustine succeeded in remaining faithful to his own (as much as the universally human) experience of sin while avoiding the Manichean temptation of justifying evil by positing an evil God. Similarly, I would like to argue, St Maximus' theory of two wills exculpates human nature, and together with it the natural will, from any Origenist views that would deem what is created as ontologically and morally inferior.[21] (It can be argued that Maximus uses the name of Mani as cryptic allusion to Origen—whom he mentions by name only once).[22] The connection becomes apparent when we are reminded that, for St Maximus, the will is defined as a natural "power"

[20] Who man ultimately becomes (i.e., a man according to the flesh, the soul, or the spirit) is the result of the "direction" toward which man chooses to move (i.e., the world, nature, or God respectively)—"πρός τινα τούτων κινηθῇ κατὰ γνώμην ἐνδιαθέτως ὁ ἄνθρωπος." (*Ep.* 9, PG 91:448A). Already in *Letter 2* it is said that the law of nature will be renewed γνωμικῶς (PG 91:396D). The same idea runs through the mature works of St Maximus; so, for example, in *Amb. 7* the willful surrender of the will, after the model of Christ's prayer in Mt 26:39, is called ἐκχώρησιν γνωμικήν (PG 91:1076B).

[21] This hypothesis is validated by von Balthasar's reading of Maximus' "critique of Origenism" (see, his *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor*, translated by Brian E. Daley, S.J., [San Francisco: Ignatius, 1988], pp. 127-136). "While motion, for Origen rested completely on the creature's undetermined freedom of will, and while this freedom, due to its extreme instability, was doomed to plunge the creature sooner or later into sin, motion for Maximus is fundamentally an orientation of nature, *which as such is good*" (p. 130, my emphasis). Maximus constantly reminds us that God is the Creator of our nature (see, for example, in *Ep.* 2, PG 91:397B and 404B), the Giver of our being, the Originator of our motion (e.g., *Amb. 7*, PG 91:1076B), and so on, and therefore, nature, being, and motion are as such good.

[22] In *Relatio motionis* 5-120AB, see Polycarp Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua*, (Rome: Pontificium Institutum S. Anselmi, 1955), p. 72. For examples of Maximus' references to Mani, see PG 91:28B and 40C.

(δύναμις),[23] and power is a form of motion (κίνησις).[24] It has been argued that St Maximus' recognition of a natural will aimed at the affirmation of freedom's universality, safeguarding that every human, by participation to the human nature, will equally participate in the natural gift of αὐτεξούσιον (self-determination).[25] This is as good as any speculation on the subject. What seems to be even more to the point, however, is the fact that, for Maximus, the will and, more specifically, self-determination is a movement, indeed self-motion,[26] and as such, it needs to be interpreted within the broader context of Maximus' thought on motion. Only then the Maximian understanding of the will will be seen in its broader cosmological implications and thus it will be freed from its confinement in moralistic interpretations of volition.

It is well-known that *Ambiguum 7* provided Fr. Polycarp Sherwood with all the necessary material that enabled him to reconstruct the Maximian refutation of Origenism.[27] That refutation's main argument, according to Sherwood's pioneering work, was "grounded in the doctrine of motion."[28] Maximus' positive reevaluation of motion turned becoming, *genesis*, and, by extension, history into instruments of teleological perfection which, in the theological language of St Maximus, translates more specifically into human salvation and deification. From the outset of this text, Maximus sets with the force of a metaphysical principle the fact that everything that moves does so as enabled by the power (δύναμιν) of its movement (κινήσεως) that is according to its desire (κατ'ἔφεσιν). This is a circumlocution to say that everything that is moved is moved by a desire seeking its fulfillment in the desideratum (ὀρεκτόν) that has been set by its nature, while linking together will and

[23] *Opusc.* 16, PG 91: 185D and 192B.

[24] ...δύναμιν δὲ, καθ' ἣν ἔχομεν τὴν τοῦ δύνασθαι κίνησιν, in *Opusc.* 1 (PG 91: 23B). Κίνησις and δύναμις being corresponding terms in the Maximian triads γένεσις, κίνησις, στάσις and οὐσία, δύναμις, ἐνέργεια, cf. Sherwood, The *Earlier Ambigua*, p. 109. To which one could add, in light of *Opus. 1*, the triad φύσις, θέλησις, πρᾶξις.

[25] "The choice of the category of 'nature' by Maximus as the soil of human freedom (and will) was due precisely to the intention on his part to stress that *no human being is exempt from freedom*. Only a universal abstract, such as 'nature' could in St Maximus' mind, express this universality" in Metropolitan John's (Zizioulas) "Person and Nature in the Theology of St Maximus the Confessor" (emphasis in the original).

[26] "...αὐτοκίνητον καὶ ἀδέσποτον δύναμιν" *Amb. 42*, PG90: 1345D.

[27] Polycarp Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of Saint Maximus the Confessor and his Refutation of Origenism* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum S. Anselmi, 1955).

[28] Ibid., p. 92.

motion. That history is still in progress is for Maximus evidence that things have not yet reached the fulfillment of their desire.[29] A little later, St Maximus will clarify that to be created amounts to being moved and to be given being implies also the gift of motion. Thus,

> If, then, rational creatures are created beings, then surely they are subject to motion, since they are moved from their natural [κατὰ φύσιν] beginning in being, toward a voluntary [κατὰ γνώμην] end in well-being.[30]

Implied here are the three steps of one of Maximus' famous triads, namely: being, well-being, ever-well-being. The first and the last of this trinity of concepts is given only by God, since it *is* God: "[f]or the end of the motion of things that are moved is to rest within eternal well-being itself, just as their beginning was being itself, which is God, who is the giver of being and the bestower of the grace of well-being, for He is the *beginning and the end.*"[31] The middle term, however, that is, "voluntary motion," depends upon us. In von Balthasar's words, motion "consists in allowing oneself to be carried by another in the depths of one's being and to be borne toward the ocean of God's rest."[32] And yet so much is at stake in this "allowing"—the whole drama of the will is condensed here, so much so that it might give the false impression of an almost effortless abandonment to the vagaries of history. On the contrary, "to be carried by another in the depths of one's being" consists in a life-long struggle punctuated with moments of dramatic anxiety, the kind of which St Augustine often describes in his *Confessions* and of which the Lord's agony in the Garden of His Passion was both the exemplar and recapitulation.

It is at this point that one can properly evaluate St Maximus' distinction between a natural and a *gnomic* will. For by positing the *gnomic* will as distinct from natural will, St Maximus did not divorce man's will from his nature, nor did he allow the anonymity of nature to engulf the precious particularity that the Gospel had set higher than the abstractions of the Academy, but he struck a balance between the existential experience of evil and the metaphysical goodness of the creation; he

[29] *Amb.* 7, PG 91:1069B and 1072C.

[30] Ibid. 1073C, translation by Nicholas Constas, *The Ambigua to Thomas and the Ambigua to John* (forthcoming).

[31] Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

[32] *Cosmic Liturgy*, p. 130.

affirmed motion's teleological perfection without denying man's freedom from the blindness of necessity; he acknowledged man's fallibility yet he upheld man's ability to receive God's grace and to accept the divine invitation to salvation; he admitted the premises of *apokatastasis* without the obligation to follow its conclusion, for "since nature and person are not identical, the restoration of nature does not of necessity entail the complete restoration of every person."[33]

In the space, the *diastema,* between protological being and eschatological ever-well-being, we find ourselves in the field where history, our history, is decided. This is the space of time, the time of action as well as of reflection, a reflection that is possible only thanks to man's opening to time. However, "man is not just temporal; he *is* Time."[34] To say this is only another way of saying what Augustine had already discovered in the eleventh book of the *Confessions*, namely that time is a property of man in his capacity to remember (past), to attend (present), and to expect (future). Those three ecstasies of time, as Heidegger would later call them, form another Augustinian trinity, that of being, knowledge, and will. Their parallelism would reveal the correspondence of past with being, of present with knowledge, and of the future with the will. It is on this point that the thought of the two Church Fathers converges most decisively. For the refutation of Manichaeism (for Augustine) or of Origenism (for Maximus) made necessary the dispelling of the Greek cyclical notion of time by offering a corrective in the form of a new conception—rectilinear and dynamic—of history. The difference between these two theories of time is ultimately the will. For a cyclical notion of history is bereft of a true future, and without a future the "I will" of the will makes little sense.

Therefore, Maximus' cosmological principle expressed in the triad coming-to-being, motion, and coming-to-rest finds its application and mirror-image on the personal level as well, where the will is the motion that moves man's nature "whose origin is *before* the creature's own being and whose goal is *beyond* it"[35] to that rest which only the alignment of human will with the divine will could provide. Moreover, as in his cosmological view, rest is not simply the cessation of motion but, in fact,

[33] Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua*, p. 204.

[34] Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, volume II: Willing, p. 42.

[35] *Cosmic Liturgy*, p. 145, emphasis in the original.

its intensification, so also with the human will in whose willful self-surrender to God's will finds its fulfillment, a fulfillment that will never know any satiety. The connection between the cosmological and the personal view, the connection between man and the cosmos, or better yet, the overlapping symmetry between history (from creation to the eschaton) and the personal history of each one of us is the idea that provides the *Confessions* with its structure and thematic unity.[36]

3. The Eschatological Destiny of the Will

The crucial question, however, in my opinion, concerns the eschatological destiny of the *gnomic* will—that is, whether the will in general and *gnomic* will in particular, will in some form, however transformed or "glorified," survive at the eschaton? Will or will not the creaturely character of the creature abide eschatologically?[37] That is—does the created/uncreated distinction still hold at the end of times and in God's kingdom? If we want the Chalcedonean formula to express an eternal truth, that is, if we want Christ to be such an eternal truth, then it must. And it must, because without the hypostatic union between the uncreated divine nature and the created human nature, Christ is not Christ anymore. As long as there is Christ, the creation itself, and thus the created/uncreated distinction, cannot be abolished.[38]

[36] I plan to deal elsewhere in more detail with this topic. For now it should suffice to point to the three gardens of the *Confessions* as demarcating the movement from Eden (Book II) to Gethsemane (Book VIII) to Paradise (Book IX). Between the two first gardens, precisely at the middle of the narration that stretches from Book I to Book IX, that is, at the middle of Book V, Augustine, like the old Israel, crosses over the waters of the Mediterranean on his personal exodus from the land of his captivity to sin (Africa) to the promised land of his salvation through baptism (Italy). Thus, the story of humanity's falling away from God and its return to God is told again in and through the details of Augustine's personal history. When the *Confessions* begin again, in Book XI, by rehearsing the beginnings of Books I and II, the vision that propels Augustine is again that of history, from creation ("from the beginning when you made heaven and earth") to eschatological re-creation ("to that everlasting reign when we shall be with you in your holy city") (XI. 2.3.) Again this trajectory is understood in terms of his own movement from being to well-being ("you...have granted me first to exist, that I may enjoy well-being," XIII. 1.1., in Maria Boulding's translation).

[37] "Will, therefore, man cease being a creature at the eschaton?" This is the question that Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) raises in a recent article "Eschatology and Existence" (in Greek), *Synaxis*, 121 (2012), p. 63. We shall discuss his answer below.

[38] On the Chalcedonean dialectic between created and uncreated, see Metropolitan John's (Zizioulas) *Communion and Otherness*, (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2006), especially chapter seven, pp. 250-285. In discussing the relationship of the will to nature we cannot lose sight of these two categories (i.e., the created and the uncreated), because the human nature as created does imply constraint and limitation—characteristics of which the divine nature is free—and therefore one should carefully avoid falling prey to speaking univocally of God's and man's nature, as it is often the case in the monothelitic debates.

Depending on how one is prepared to answer the questions we posed above, it can be safely predicted what view one would take with regard to the *gnomic* will: if the created/uncreated distinction will be abolished for the sake of some eschatological panentheism (cf. 1 Cor. 15:28), then *gnōmē* and the person are obstacles in this process of deification, and they too must be overcome. If, on the other hand, the distinction somehow still remains, then one cannot dispense with *gnōmē*.

In the Christian East, there has always been an emphasis on a strong understanding of deification—but such deification is by grace and not by nature.[39] Yet, does such a strong understanding of the deification of nature mean, in light of the created/uncreated distinction, that human nature, as deified, is eschatologically overcome not only in its fallen, but also in its creaturely character? I would opt for saying that the human nature is perfected, even though its creaturely character remains.

That nature as created *by God* is susceptible to such deification (*capax Dei)* is, of course, without question. Yet, as *created* by God it is also subject to limitations that made it impossible for it to reach such a goal by itself—naturally—otherwise we are confronted with the dangers of Pelagianism. As created by God, nature has been given both a direction as well as the impetus that will carry it toward such a goal. It is us, I admit, with our *gnomic* wills that keep taking detours away from that aim, delaying the process of our salvation—yet, I would also say that these long detours and the resistance that they represent on our part against God's plan are somehow instrumental to our salvation and that, therefore, not only our *gnōmē* would not be abolished, but even its history, which is nothing else than history itself, must be upheld and preserved.

[39] In a number of passages, St Maximus insists that deification (i.e., salvation, grace) is not within our power, nor can be brought about by anything we can do. "We experience divinization passively—we do not achieve it ourselves, because it lies beyond nature. For we have, within our nature, no power capable of receiving divinization" (*QThal.* 22, PG 90, 324A, as quoted by von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, p. 149. A lesson that needs to be remembered by those who are all too keen in offering in various spiritual manuals the steps ("purification-enlightenment-theosis") of a self-made deification, which is nothing else but the deception of self-idolatry.

God, I assume, does not want to save us away from history—by some Neo-Platonist *epistrophe* to the One—but to save our history, especially because, since the Incarnation, it has been also *His* history. If this is, indeed, a fundamental tenet of Christian faith, then God does not come into history in order to save the human nature, but rather in order to save us *from* the anonymity of our nature—a freedom not so much *from* nature itself, but rather a freedom *for* nature to leave behind the shackles of self-love (φιλαυτία) for the sake of relating through love with the other and with God.[40]

It is important to raise the seemingly obvious question of "what is saved?" If God does not save the human person but the human nature as a genus and as an abstraction, then He is not anymore the God "of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob" but the God of the Platonic Ideas. Another way to say this would be to ask, "what has fallen?": the human nature or the human person? Both questions, however, operated on an unnecessary and superficial distinction, for it is obvious that it is the human nature that is restored by the salvation of the person, as it was the human nature that had fallen by the sin of a man. It is at this point that one can fully appreciate the false dichotomies to which the separation of nature from person and of person from nature would inevitably lead.

Since for St Maximus the *logos* of nature is the principle of unity, while the will, and especially what he later called *gnomic* will, is an element of differentiation, distinction, and even division, his eschatological vision of a humanity united not only with itself but also with God seems to suggest the eradication of *gnomic* will or, at the very least, its complete appropriation by nature. So, in his *Letter 2*, he speaks of *one* nature and *one* will "with God and with one another"—a goal that will be achieved when love persuades *gnōmē* "to follow nature and not in any way to be at variance with the *logos* of nature."[41] It was passages like this one that prompted Lars

[40] I remind us again of Maximus' bold assertion that the goal of God is "to free man from both the world and nature" (*Ep.* 9, PG 91: 448C).

[41] *Ep. 2*, (PG 91, 396C), translated by Andrew Louth in *Maximus the Confessor* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 86-7. The same unity of the Wills is implied as the effect of the Lord's passion "[He] made peace and reconciled us with the Father and each other through Himself, by not having any more the *gnōmē* resisting the *logos* of nature, but as [He had] the nature, so [He had] the *gnōmē* invariable" *Or. Dom.*, PG 90, 880A. It is important to notice that here St Maximus ascribes a *gnōmē* to Christ, a position that later, during the monothelitic polemics, he retracted (see, *Pyrr.*, PG 91, 308D and further).

Thunberg to observe that "one might get the impression that Maximus was arguing in favour of the idea that the human will should in the end be entirely swallowed up by the divine will."[42] How can we, from within the theological vision of St Maximus, maintain a balance between unity and difference, between natural communion and personal otherness?

In St Maximus' theology of two wills a fundamental experience is reflected, namely, the experience of a duality that abides between *what* I am, my nature, and *who* I am, my personhood. Between the "what" (λόγος τῆς φύσεως) and the "who" or the "how" (τρόπος τῆς ὑπάρξεως) one should come to recognize what is most abstract and that which is most concrete. In each one of us, two absolutes come together—the universality of nature and the particularity of personhood. Insofar as I am a human being, I am no one and everyone—everyone, because nature is common, consubstantially common with the humankind, yet no one, for humanity cannot assume the position implied and necessitated for him who speaks in the first person. On the other hand, as a person I am irreducibly myself—a position uniquely posited and irreplaceable. Between these two absolutes, there is a dialectic relation: if I am myself that is only insofar as I am a human being, an instantiation of the human nature; conversely, if there is a human nature, if one can think and speak of such an abstraction, that is only because of particular persons, otherwise "human nature" would have been an empty concept. The idea of a dialectical relation between nature and self might suggest certain symmetry. Yet, the person not only enjoins an ontological precedence over the community of nature (even though, in turn, it is constituted by such a community), it is also always more than its nature; the person is the surplus of an existence that refuses to be completely identified with its essence.

The *distance* of which we get a glimpse through the ontological difference between existence and existents, the distance between myself and my nature, becomes diminished in those moments where I act only naturally—when I am absorbed to the natural mandates of eating, sleeping, etc.[43] In such moments, life becomes effortless or light, as in Kun-

[42] Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor* (Chicago: Open Court, 1995), p. 228.

[43] The distance between existence and existents is best articulated and discussed by Emmanuel Levinas in one of his early works that bears this title (Existence and Existents, or as the

dera's *Unbearable Lightness of Being*. Incidentally, but not accidentally, these are also the same moments where one becomes less personal and, one could argue, less human. On the other hand, being oneself becomes invariably a burden that needs to be taken up as one takes up his cross.[44] Being a person—personal being—constitutes and is constituted always by an agony.[45] It is not accidental that St Maximus' discussion of such a personal will turns always to the exemplar of Christ's agony at the Garden of Gethsemane.[46]

Is man meant—either in his alleged prelapsarian Paradise or in the eschatological perfection—to be only a *natural* being, and if so, can we still speak of man as distinct from the animal? Is not the Fall precisely this: the fall from the animal state or the fall of the animal to humanity, where the sting of consciousness is felt at the moment when "their eyes were opened, and they realized they were naked" (Gen. 3:7)? Is humanity, the very consciousness whose inception is herald by the realization of nakedness, the result of sin or is sin a possibility only for such a naked and fallen being? Are we to lament or perhaps rejoice over this *felix culpa* that gave humanity to man even before it gave humanity to God? And is not this ability to see myself and my sin, the ability to reflect on my sinfulness, the very occasion that sets me on the path to repentance and thus to the ultimate undoing of sin?[47] Man's ability to *see himself*—the ability to turn his reflective gaze upon himself—as signaled by the verse already quoted from *Genesis*, points at the distance of myself from myself, the distance between the I and the nature that continuously claims it for herself: that is, to the advent of consciousness. The distance

French original better suggests "from *Existence to Existents*," translated by Alphonso Lingis, [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978]). It is there that Levinas employs for the first time the term *hypostasis* in order to name the personal existent in contradistinction to impersonal existence which has been known ever since as *il y a*.

[44] "The being that is taken up [enhypostasized and made personal] is a burden." E. Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, p. 78.

[45] Contemporary philosophy provides here an abundance of testimonials, from Kierkegaard's anxiety in the moment of decision (taken up again later by Heidegger in his essay "What is Metaphysics?") to Heidegger's care (*Sorge*) in *Being and Time*.

[46] See in particular, *Opusc.* 6 and 7, (PG 91, 65A-89B); *Opusc.* 15 (Spiritual and dogmatic tome against Heraclius' *Ekthesis*), PG 91: 153-184. See also note 19 above.

[47] On reflection, made possible by the distance in time, as the means of un-doing sin, see my reading of *Oedipus Rex* in "Thebes Revisited: Theodicy and the Temporality of Ethics" in *Research in Phenomenology* 39:2 (2009), pp. 292-306.

that consciousness *is* appears now as an essential and fundamental human characteristic so much so that one could not do away with it without, at the same time, getting rid of man as such.

Thus, our initial question about the eschatological survival of the creature's creaturely character needs now to be reposited more specifically with reference to consciousness. Will there be a consciousness at the eschaton; that is, will time as *distentio ipsius animi* continue to characterize our existence in God's kingdom, or are we to assume that we will be "like the angels in heaven" (Mt. 22:30; Mk. 12:25)? We know relatively little about angels in order to take their existence as a model of our life after the common resurrection.[48] Yet, they seem to be a reasonable example insofar as they are, like us, created beings, yet, unlike us they do not suffer the vicissitudes of time. I appeal to St Augustine's authority one last time, for whom an angel:

> ...shows no trace of mutability at any point, for it is bound fast by the whole strength of its love to you, who are always present to it; and having nothing to expect in the future, nor any memories to relegate to the past, it is neither affected by change nor a prey to distended consciousness [*nec in tempore ulla distenditur*].[49]

The opinion that humanity eschatologically will be without memory, and therefore without consciousness, would seem to find Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) in agreement. In his article "Eschatology and Existence,"[50] he argues that at the eschaton the soul will not retain its ability to remember.[51] Is this loss of memory restricted to the memory of

[48] See S.J. John Gavin, *"They are like the angels in the heavens": Angelology and Anthropology in the Thought of Maximus the Confessor* (Rome, 2009).

[49] *Confessions*, XII. 11.12, translation by Maria Boulding, p. 318. Elsewhere, however, (in *De Genesi ad Litteram*, 4.22.39) St Augustine seems to accept the ability of angels for self-reflection, an ability that would suggest an act of consciousness. I am thankful to Matt Clemente for bringing this point to my attention. Kierkegaard too sees angels as without time and without history: "Even if Michael had made a record of all the errands he had been sent on and performed, this is nevertheless not his history." The *Concept of Anxiety*, p. 49. For Kierkegaard, the historical is the result of sexuality (sexual differentiation), and, therefore, of sin. "A perfect spirit cannot be conceived as sexually qualified. This is also in accord with the teachings of the Church about the nature of the Resurrection [alluding to Mt. 22:30], in accord with its representation of angels, and in accord with the dogmatic definitions with respect to the person of Christ." *Op .cit.* p, 79.

[50] Published in *Synaxis*, 121 (2012), pp. 43-72 (in Greek).

[51] Ibid., p. 46. The argument is made on the basis of a passage from St Maximus' *QD* 13 (PG 90: 796BC).

sins only, or does it concern every memory in general? On the other hand, the eschatological parables of the Gospel (e.g., Lk. 16:19-31) seem to suggest the preservation of memory. The rich man remembered the poor Lazarus and the relatives he had left behind. When Metropolitan John writes in the same article that "the dead are not separated from the relations that determined their historical existence, on the contrary, it is those relations that will ultimately judge their eternal future,"[52] he seems to entertain the eschatological existence of memory; otherwise of what good would those relations be if one does not remember them? I would argue that we will remember even what is now, *sub specie tempore*, perceived as "evil"—but it will be remembered not *as* evil, for through the perspective of time that the eschaton will afford us, indeed through the perspective of the end of times, what was previously experienced as evil will be then seen with a different understanding. I bring as an example the Lord's Passion which, when it happened, was undoubtedly perceived as the ultimate evil. Yet, that same event is now commemorated in the Eucharist, which is the prefiguration of our eschatological understanding, as the source of our salvation. The same event is presented quite differently "at the moment" and through the distance that time affords us. Finally, if the Eucharist is a foreshadowing of the eschaton so much so that what is still future (historically) can be remembered as having taken place already, that is, if the future can be evoked in the present as past, then, are we not allowed to assume that in the eschatological future the past could also be evoked as present?

With or without memory, humanity cannot exist "outside" temporality: the distinction that Metropolitan John introduces in that same study on eschatology, a distinction between two eternities and between two times, is very useful.[53] The eternity of man, who as a creature had a beginning, is not the same as the ageless and motionless eternity of God. The former will be enjoyed by grace, but not at the expense of the creaturely character of the creation. The beginning of creation gave to everything that is created the *permanent* characteristic of motion. "For everything that comes into existence is subject to movement," St Maximus

[52] Ibid., p. 69.
[53] Ibid., p. 62-66.

reminds us.[54] Surely, that movement will eschatologically come to rest in God, yet God's infinity as well as the soul's natural definition by motion allows St Maximus to speak of a rest that is ever-moving (στάσις ἀεικίνητος).[55] The two understandings of motion that are here implied can be said to correspond to the two distinct experiences of times: one during history that is characterized by distance (διάστημα), the other at the eschaton, *epectatic* but perhaps not *diastematic* (to use these two concepts of St Gregory of Nyssa). The former separates and divides; the latter re-collects and unites. The perceptive reader would perhaps recognize in the distinction between these two experiences of temporality an analogy to Maximus' theology of two wills. St Maximus dedicates a large section of his first *Theological Opusculum* (to the priest Marinus) to the eschatological destiny of the will. There he makes quite clear that the *gnomic* will will be retained, for he emphatically maintains that in God's kingdom there will be no identity either of God's will itself with that of the saints, or, in fact, of the will of the saints itself with each other, but only a convergence of what they will be willing:

> Not every human's will will be one [μία] with respect to the mode of its motion [τρόπῳ τῷ κατὰ τὴν κίνησιν]. And at no point will the will of God and that of the saints become one in all its aspects [κατὰ πάντα τρόπον], as it seemed to some, even though the objective of God's will [τὸ θεληθέν] and that of the saints is one, namely the salvation of the elect, that being a divine goal and an end preconceived before all ages, and a point about which the will of the saints among themselves and the will of the God who saves them will converge [γενήσεται σύμβασις]....For God's Will desires by its nature the salvation of men, while, on the other hand, humanity wills by nature its salvation, thus, that which saves and that which is saved can never be the same [ταυτὸν], even if the goal of both is everyone's salvation, as proposed by God and chosen by men.[56]

Then, St Maximus goes on to argue *ad absurdum* what would have been the untenable conclusions that one would be forced to draw if we

[54] *Amb.* 7 (PG 91:1073B), translation by Blowers and Wilken in *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ*, p. 50).
[55] *Amb.* 67 (PG 91 :1401A) ; *QThal.* 65 (PG 90 : 760A) ; *Carit.*, 3, 25 (PG 90: 1024C). See, *The Earlier Ambigua*, p. 194, note 24; and also Vasileios Betsakos' study *Στάσις Ἀεικίνητος* (Athens: Armos, 2006, in Greek).
[56] *Opusc.* 1 (PG 91:25AB, my translation).

were to entertain such an identity between the wills of the saints or their will and that of God. It seems that for St Maximus our two wills will retain their integrity in the age to come as much as in the present age, or better yet, even more then, when the discord between them will have been brought to harmony with each other and immutability (ἀτρεψία) with regards to their object of desire.

In the mature articulation on the subject that *Opusculum 3* represents, St Maximus differentiates between the two wills by defining natural will only as a possibility, as an ability that is actualized (after an Aristotelian fashion) by a particular someone, a willing one (ὁ θέλων). In order to elucidate his distinction, St Maximus provides an example, that of language:

> ...to be disposed by nature to will and to will are not the same thing, as it is not the same thing to be disposed by nature to speak and to speak. For the capacity for speaking is always naturally there, but one does not always speak, since what belongs to the essence is contained in the principle of the nature, while what belongs to the wish is shaped by the intention [*gnōmē*] of the one who speaks. So being able to speak always belongs to the nature, but *how* you speak belongs to the *hypostasis*. So it is with being disposed by nature to will and willing.[57]

Even if, at the end of times, we all will say the same thing, namely "your will be done," as we all say now the "Amen" in the liturgical prefiguration of the *eschaton*, that unison does not obliterate difference, for "how you speak belongs to the hypostasis." And thus we are allowed to utter our prayers and our "amens" not only in our languages and idioms, but also with our distinct accents. Will, like language—to continue borrowing from St Maximus' example—is highly idiomatic as much as it is hypostatic. No one doubts that the capacity to speak is endowed by nature—yet, paradoxically, a nature that is not enhypostasized in the human person is mute. Neither the "your will be done" of the Lord's Prayer, nor the "*maranatha*" of the Church is or can be uttered by nature. In the great conversation between God and humanity that begun with the world's creation and will continue in the *epektasis* of "the ages of ages," only persons can be partakers.

[57] *Opusc.* 3 (PG 91, 43A), translation by Andrew Louth in *Maximus the Confessor*, p. 193.

The Concept of ἕξις (hexis) in the Theological Anthropology of Saint Maximus the Confessor

Philipp Gabriel Renczes

Manifestly, we would search in vain for the lexis "theological anthropology" within St Maximus the Confessor's vocabulary: "theological anthropology" comes into common use only at the first half of twentieth century[1] as rejoinder and, at the same time, "counter-movement" to the more and more explicit formation of the branch of study, defined as "philosophical anthropology." In the context of an analysis of the concept ἕξις—without a doubt one of the Confessor's own key terms[2]—the expression "theological anthropology" might imply or encourage unbalanced or anachronistic impositions. Indeed, while contemporary theology sees in "theological anthropology" the possibility of regrouping such wide-spread topics as "human body and soul," "gender," or "free will" within a systematic study of the human being's essence and destiny before God, St Maximus' concern regarding the "anthropological" was never isolated or independent from its Christological base. In other words, as for St Maximus all humanity is exclusively validated in the act of the Incarnation when the Second Person of the Trinity took on a human nature, also all reasoning about the human

[1] The modern era with its decisive turn toward "the self" and, thereby, toward "anthropology" as distinct philosophical discipline goes back to Immanuel Kant and the rationalism of the enlightenment and contains an "anti-metaphysical" streak, seeking emancipation from Christian explanations of human essence and destiny. In the twentieth century, the theologies of K. Barth, K. Rahner, P. Tillich, H.-U. von Balthasar, and W. Pannenberg can be seen as important attempts to identify this modern anthropological interest with a vital aspect of the proper theological task.

[2] Cf. P. G. Renczes, *Agir de Dieu et liberté de l'homme,* Cerf, Paris 2003, in particular 217.

being or all "Anthropo-Logy" receives its definitive significance from the eternal Logos through whom and for whom all is made (Col 1, 16).

However, on closer inspection, it can be observed that the contemporary discipline "theological anthropology" in point of fact carries a feature that is typical of Maximus' very same theological approach, clearly visible in the latter's reflections with regard to the *theologoumenon* of "Divinization of the Human Person": a passion for the "synthetical" potentialities of theology, the exploration of which conceptually draws the human reality close to the divine (without certainly solving their ontological differences).[3] In fact, it is within the attempt at explaining the divinization process that the significance of the term ἕξις emerges. There, it structures the encounter between God and man, vigorously expressing Maximus' persuasion that God's activity in favor of creation culminating in the gift of divinization is realized with man's co-operation, actively transforming a "disposition," given by God to the saints, into a divinized eternal "being-God."

> For these ones, whose entire choice was completely transferred by the Holy Spirit through a new sort of begetting (γέννησις) from earth to the heavens and whose mind has been transformed in true intimate knowledge through actualization (κατ' ἐνέργειαν) with blessed rays of God the Father (Jn 1:17) in such a way that they appear as another god, in becoming, by the grace according to habitus (κατὰ τὴν ἕξιν), that which God does not experience, but "is" according to essence (κατ' οὐσίαν). For these ones, then, the choice according to the habitus (κατὰ τὴν ἕξιν) of virtue and knowledge has manifestly become infallible, since they are no longer able to deny what they have know in act (κατ' ἐνέργειαν) by experience itself.[4]

While ἕξις according to St Maximus, occupies a central "anthropological" role in this true encounter between God and man, the initiative

[3] It is a common among patristic scholars to point out the highly synthetical character that distinguishes Maximus the Confessor's thought. Cf. e. g. H. U. von Balthasar, *The Cosmic Liturgy*, trans. B. E. Daley, 29: "In all its dimensions, the inner form of his (sc. Maximus') work is synthesis."

[4] Ὧν δὲ κατὰ τὴν γέννησιν, τὴν ὅλην προαίρεσιν λαβὸν τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς πρὸς οὐρανοὺς δι' ὅλου μετέθηκε, καὶ διὰ τῆς κατ' ἐνέργειαν ἀληθοῦς ἐπιγνώσεως, ταῖς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς μακαρίαις ἀκτῖσι τὸν νοῦν μετεποίησεν, ὡς ἄλλον εἶναι θεὸν νομισθῆναι παρόντα τὰ κατὰ τὴν ἕξιν διὰ τῆς χάριτος· ὅπερ οὐ πάσχων, ἀλλ' ὑπάρχων κατ' οὐσίαν ἐστὶν ὁ θεός· τούτων σαφῶς ἀναμάρτητος κατὰ τὴν ἕξιν τῆς ἀρετῆς καὶ τῆς γνώσεως ἡ προαίρεσις γέγονεν, μὴ δυναμένων ἀρνήσασθαι τὸ διὰ τῆς πείρας αὐτῆς κατ' ἐνέργειαν διεγνωσμένον (*QThal.*, 6, CCSG 7, 69, 28-71, 38, PG 90, 281 A-B). (my translation, as are all other quotes from St Maximus' writings)

and finalization that conjointly trigger and complete the "event-process" of this same encounter clearly appear to pertain exclusively to divine action (ἐνέργεια), alone capable of elevating man from his proper state of being immanent to the state of being divine.

At this stage, we are able to specify yet another difference between a contemporary "theological anthropology" in comparison with Maximus' theology of ἕξις: while modernity focuses its anthropological interest on the investigation of realities that concern the human person as such—in comparison to other living beings and (the) transcendent being—Maximus, in continuity with the Greek philosophical heritage, relates the phenomenological data with the metaphysical question rising from the search for "the sense of it all." This is where the sense of Christian belief in Creation and the Election of the First Covenant with Abraham, Moses, and the prophetic renewal and, especially, the sense of Christ's Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection ultimately coincides with the search for the sense of "being."

At this time the Christological base of the Confessor's anthropology, referred to previously, rejoins St Maximus' profound conviction that the definitive sense of the history of salvation lies in the mutual "exchange to be given" between God and human beings where creation, incarnation, and divinization converge into God's one magnificent eternal design. Just as much as Jesus Christ is offered to the creation in the unification of His divine nature with the human nature, God's device and purpose for all created lie in the transformation of human beings in such a way that human beings are united to the divine perfections, not as their own perfections but through active participation in them as bestowed on them as a gift to be shared with one another and handed back to God. Being deified means, for the Confessor, a divine operation that leads, through love, the human to the ultimate goal of his/her being. God and man—not separate, each in its own sphere, remaining unfathomably disjointed from each other—but on the contrary, both involved in a relationship of communication and sharing of what they have. It is within this dynamic oscillation between the "Christological-historical" and the "Christological-metaphysical" pole that the ensuing reflections attempt at elucidating the significance that St Maximus ascribes to the constitution of ἕξις in the human person.

1. Ἕξις in its relationship with γνώμη (gnōmē)

Such close relationship of human nature with the divine as it is claimed by the doctrine of divinization, is obviously not without risk: based on the biblical witness[5] but also traceable in the Hellenistic tradition, such as in Orphism, Platonism, Stoicism, and Neo-Platonism,[6] this school of thought easily lends itself to a compromising understanding that blurs or levels the radical ontological difference between God and man and leads to various types of pantheism.[7] Within this perspective of a need for a critical approach to the conception of divinization, the term ἕξις is successfully employed by St Maximus as a true centerpiece around which the whole God-human being relationship is structured. Only asymptotically rendered in modern languages through the expression of "habitus"—a translation that arguably portrays best the dynamic content it implies[8]—ἕξις experiences in St Maximus' writings a fully-developed exploration of the Christo-Pneumatological capabilities that the term releases, once it passes from a philosophical understanding to be part of a Christian thought, where "personhood" and "analogy" achieve a whole new level of significance.

In his analysis of the human act—the object of the Confessor's interest in the battle against Monoenergism and, even more so, Monothelitism, when he is confronted with a deep reflection on the faculties of the human and divine nature—Maximus emphasizes the importance for human beings of the instance ἕξις (*hexis*). Ἕξις, as known from Aristoteles' Nicomachean Ethics, is a term assimilated to the concept

[5] Cf. 2 Pt 1,4a: "He has bestowed on us the precious and very great promises, so that through them you may come to share in the divine nature"; Jn 10:34: "Jesus answered them, 'Is it not written in your law, "I said, 'You are gods?'"

[6] Voir E. Des Places, s. v. "Divinisation (I. Pensée religieuse des Grecs)", *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 3, Paris, Beauchesne, 1957, col. 1372-1375.

[7] In the history of Christianity, this tendency is verified for example in the statement of the Arian Eunomius of Cyzicus who claimed to know God as well as he as a human person could know himself.

[8] With the translation *habitus*, one should not simply identify the significance of ἕξις, as it is contained in Maximus' doctrine, with the "habitus-ontology," developed by Medieval scholasticism. Even if a confrontation of Greek patristic *hexis*-anthropology with Latin scholasticism may possibly show very intelligible convergences, one cannot put aside the perception that in scholastic theology *habitus* served as a technical term with boundaries that do not quite correspond to the dynamic intersection of the two Christological levels that we have come to identify in this article.

of virtue; as a matter of fact, ἕξις defines the meaning of virtue as a stable disposition which adjusts our judgment so as to regulate our behavior in daily life.

> Virtue, then, is a stable disposition concerned with decision, consisting of a fair measure for us; it [i.e., this disposition] is determined by reason, that is to say, that by which a prudent man would determine [his decision].[9]

If ἕξις undoubtedly concerns a moral sense, in particular in the process of decision-making, the merit goes to Maximus the Confessor for having inspected theological implications of ἕξις in order to elucidate the reality of divinization. Ἕξις can refer then to the presence and action of grace in the human person, as ability, on the one side, to receive ἕξεις (*hexeis)* from the Holy Spirit, and on the other, to transform in us God's gifts in stable ἕξεις (*hexeis)*, i.e., stable dispositions designed to lead to the completion of a dynamic and growing communion with God:

> Who received a change regarding his flesh at the level of his "faculty of judgment" (γνωμικός) through the perfect "circumcision" of all natural movements, is thereby clearly showing to become god by grace, being in his action beyond the matter according to the flesh, and in his thought beyond the form according to the mind, out of which [matter and form] the existence of beings are constituted. He [the divinized] constitutes himself and—to say it all—becomes according to a habitus (ἕξις) of virtue and knowledge, totally immaterial and formless, thanks to God-Logos who became for us truly one of us in matter and form, being in his nature immaterial and without form in a superior way.[10]

> So if each of the believers is given—in correspondence to the degree of his/her faith—the manifestation of the Holy Spirit through the participation in this or that gift, clearly in proportion to one's own faith and the disposition that he/she has given to the soul, they also

[9] Ἔστιν ἄρα ἡ ἀρετὴ ἕξις προαιρετική, ἐν μεσότητι οὖσα τῇ πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ὡρισμένη λόγῳ καὶ ὡς ἂν ὁ φρόνιμος ὁρίσειε (*Eth. Nic.*, II, 6, 1106 b 35).

[10] Τὴν πρὸς τὴν σάρκα γνωμικὴν ἀλλοτρίωσιν διὰ τῆς τελείας περιτομῆς τῶν αὐτῶν φυσικῶν κινημάτων εἵλετο σαφῶς ὑπαγορεύων ὅτιπερ, ἵνα γένηται καὶ αὐτὸς χάριτι Θεός, ὑπὲρ τὴν ὕλην κατὰ σάρκα διὰ τῆς πράξεως, καὶ κατὰ νοῦν διὰ θεωρίας ὑπὲρ τὸ εἶδος, ἐξ ὧν ἡ τῶν ὄντων ὕπαρξις ὑφέστηκεν, ἑαυτὸν καταστήσας, καὶ τὸ ὅλον εἰπεῖν, κατὰ τὴν ἕξιν τῆς ἀρετῆς καὶ τῆς γνώσεως ἄϋλος καὶ ἀνείδεος πάντη γενόμενος, διὰ τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς ἐν ὕλῃ καὶ εἴδει καθ' ἡμᾶς ἀληθῶς ἐξ ἡμῶν γενόμενον Θεὸν Λόγον, τὸν κατὰ φύσιν κυρίως ἄϋλον καὶ ἀνείδεον (*Amb. Io.*, 30, PG 91, 1273C)

> receive an activation of the Spirit in the right degree, having been bestowed with a corresponding habit (*hexis*) towards an actualization of a specific commandment.[11]

A special interest is reserved for the observation that God's gift, in form of ἕξις, will have to "fix" a situation of instability in which human beings find themselves, under the influence of sinfulness profoundly marking mankind since the day sin has entered the world. Drawn to a sheer endless variety of options and finding it next to impossible to discover what Aristotle had called the "fair measure" (let alone the golden means) between the "too much" and the "too little," in the post-lapsarian state decisions become a very intricate and complex task. Ultimately, the problem does not lie in exterior structures, but inside the human person where the faculty of assuming one's own freedom as a fundamental characteristic of a one's own existence is seriously compromised with regard to both the personal "judgment" and "will," either of them instances that, in Maximus' Greek, are expressed by the same word: γνώμη (*gnōmē*). Thus, on the one side, Maximus can claim that γνώμη (*gnōmē*) is the human "way of designing personal life" which serves to indicate the capacity of each individual to deliberately take up one's life; on the other side, γνώμη already signals the precariousness and instability with which all of us operate to perform the task. In this situation of ambivalence, a Christ-like, God-corresponding ἕξις becomes the true "finalizer" of the human γνώμη.

It is in this light that Maximus' growing interest in Christological questions and, within Christology, in particular the question of how Jesus Christ in his earthly, Incarnated existence realized the mission to bring about the salvation of men is directed toward the issue of decision-making as a priority area in which the Incarnation and the Christian's personal life intersect. In this perspective, the young monk's claims regarding a "spiritual union of God with us" out of the *Mystagogia* will find in his later works of maturity like the *Opusculum theologicum polemicum* 20, a deepened Christological explanation:

[11] Εἰ τοίνυν κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς ἐν ἑκάστῳ πίστεως δίδοται ἡ φανέρωσις τοῦ Πνεύματος, ἐν τῇ μετοχῇ τοῦ τοιοῦδε χαρίσματος· ἕκαστος τῶν πιστῶν δηλονότι κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως, καὶ τῆς ὑποκειμένης αὐτῷ κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν διαθέσεως, συμμεμετρημένην δέχεται τοῦ Πνεύματος τὴν ἐνέργειαν, χαριζομένην αὐτῷ τῆσδε ἢ τῆσδε τῆς ἐντολῆς τὴν ἁρμόζουσαν πρὸς ἐνέργειαν ἕξιν (*QThal.*, 29, CCSG 7, 211, 15-21, PG 90, 365 A-B).

> Sons of God are all those who neither in fear of threats or with the desire of promises, but by means of a [certain] mode (τρόπος) and a [certain] habitus (ἕξις) with regard to the "inclination and disposition of the faculty to judge" (γνώμη) of the soul towards what is good and beautiful never separate from God as the son whom it is said: "Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours." (Luke 15.31).[12]
>
> He [Christ] concurred even with his natural and human will to the paternal and divine will, having no distance to his that would result from an opposition and giving himself to us as an imprint, he subjected his own voluntarily.[13]

Through the interwoven affirmation that the Son of God is given to us with His own will, just as much as He obeyed the Father's will, Maximus manages to highlight that Jesus Christ's ἕξις towards the Father, leads to the transmission of the same disposition in human beings. Divinization of man in the "habitus with regard to the inclination and disposition of the faculty to judge (γνώμη)"[14] is made possible through Christ's letting go (see Phil 2:7) of his own. In a play on words referring to the fact that ἕξις signifies not only "disposition," but also indicates "possession," following its root ἔχειν (echein = to have), Maximus can say: "the dispossessions (*sterêseis*) of the Lord have become for us ἕξις (*hexeis*)."[15]

In other words, Christ's "redirection" of the human γνώμη through His own ἕξις becomes such a powerful act as to be capable of healing the human person in her very roots, insofar as it is Christ himself who is the ἕξις imparted to human beings.

With this it becomes obvious why Christ's actions are realized according to ἕξεις or, rather, Christ's being subsists as ἕξις, though not—at least according to Maximus' final verdict—having a γνώμη,[16] the latter

[12] Υἱοὶ δέ, οἱ μήτε φόβῳ τῶν ἠπειλημένων, μήτε πόθῳ τῶν ἐπηγγελμένων, ἀλλὰ τρόπῳ καὶ ἕξει τῆς πρὸς τὸ καλὸν κατὰ γνώμην τῆς ψυχῆ βοπῆς τε καὶ διαθέσεως, μηδέποτε τοῦ Θεοῦ χωριζόμενοι· κατ' ἐκεῖνον τὸν υἱόν, πρὸς ὃν εἴρηται, Τέκνον, σὺ πάντοτε μετ' ἐμοῦ εἶ, καὶ τὰ ἐμὰ πάντα σά ἐστι· τοῦτο κατὰ τὴν ἐν χάριτι θέσιν ἐνδεχομένως ὑπάρχοντες, ὅπερ ὁ Θεὸς κατὰ τὴν φύσιν καὶ αἰτίαν καὶ ἔστι (*Myst.*, XXIV, PG 91, 712 A).

[13] κἀν τῷ φυσικῷ καὶ ἀνθρωπίνῳ πρὸς τὸ Πατρικὸν καὶ θεῖον συνέβαινε μέν, οὐδεμίαν τὴν ἐξ ἀντιπράξεως ἔχων πρὸς ἐκεῖνο διαφοράν, ὑποτύπωσιν δὲ διδοὺς ἡμῖν ἑαυτόν, τὸ οἰκεῖον ἑκουσίως ὑπέταττεν (*Opusc.*, 20, PG 91, 241 C).

[14] Cf. *Myst.*, XXIV, PG 91, 712 A, quoted above.

[15] αἱ τοῦ Κυρίου στερήσεις ἡμῖν ἕξεις ἐγένοντο (*QD*, I, 12, PG 90, 793 B, CCSG 10, 143.4-144.5).

[16] Cf. *Opusc.* 16, PG 91, 192 A, 193.

always involved in sinful decision-making. Moreover, it also shows that divinization of the human person is indeed realized by the very divinization of Christ's human nature whose ἕξις Jesus Christ willingly shares with us. The fullness of ἕξις that characterizes the state of the human nature of the Incarnate Word, filled with the glory of His divine nature, becomes the ultimate measure of the fullness to which man can aspire. This "fullness" of man finds its highest expression in the appropriate conformation to the Father's will, just as is the case for the "archetype" Jesus.

2. "Εξις as analogous finalization of the "way of being" (τρόπος)

Even so, it needs to be acknowledged that "it is not possible that there is a sole faculty of judgment (γνώμη), shared by God and the choir of the saints."[17]

Is this supposed to mean that, according to Maximus, we need to conclude that the deification of man is never perfect? Once again, it seems that the "teleological (finalizing)" character typically pertaining to the Confessor's thought[18] will help to move toward a solution. If there is no identity between God and man on the level of their respective natures and their respective modes of actualization of their γνώμη, there is, however a concurrence of their goals, made by divine will to become exactly the same. In other words: there can be and there is a complete identification between God and man as to the purpose of the act of willing:

> Unique is exactly what is wanted by God and the saints: the salvation of the saved. As the divine purpose (σκοπός), pre-conceived before all ages, on behalf of which there is going to be a concurrence of wills among all those who are saved and God the Savior, sharing Himself with all in general and with each in particular. [...] The purpose of the two is one: the universal salvation offered by God and chosen by the saints.[19]

[17] μίαν γνώμην κατὰ πάντα τρόπον εἶναι τοῦ τε Θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ τῶν ἁγίων χοροῦ, ἀδύνατον (*Opusc.*, 1, PG 91, 25 D).

[18] Cf. Ph.-G. Renczes, *L'Agir de Dieu et liberté de l'homme. Recherches sur l'anthropologie théologique de saint Maxime le Confesseur,* Paris, Cerf, 2003, 150-154.

[19] κἂν ἓν τὸ θεληθὲν ἐστι τῷ τε Θεῷ καὶ τοῖς ἁγίοις, ἡ σωτηρία τῶν σωζομένων· σκοπὸς ὑπάρχουσα θεῖος, ὡς τέλος πάντων προεπινοηθὲν τῶν αἰώνων· περὶ ὅ, τῶν τε σωζομένων πρὸς ἀλλήλους καὶ Θεοῦ τοῦ σώζοντος, κατὰ τὴν θέλησιν γενήσεται σύμβασις· ὅλου ἐν πᾶσι γενικῶς, καὶ τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον ἰδικῶς χωρήσαντος τοῦ Θεοῦ (...) Εἰ γὰρ τοῦ μὲν Θεοῦ τὸ θέλημα φύσει σωστικόν,

The Confessor's vision proves to provide two great benefits: not only does it preserve the theology of divinization from the "pantheistic trap," while suggesting an extremely strong and "energizing" impulse to it, but also it opens up space to a positive sense of the difference of human existences, here interpreted as different modes of divinization of men, that is to say various "ways of realization" of the union of the divine and human will. Indeed, says Maximus, not only is there non-identity between the divine and human wills, but it has to be affirmed that "by way of the mode (τρόπος) of movement, the will of all men is not one."[20]

> Each one of us does not act principally as being "someone (τις)" [person], but as being "something (τι ὤν)," that is to say as a human being [that is, according to one's nature]. Yet, as "someone" like Peter or Paul, he determines the mode (τρόπος) of his action (ἐνέργεια) giving it a (specific) configuration through decrease or growth, in one way or another according to its own faculty to judge (γνώμη). Thus, with regard to the action, in the mode (τρόπος) the characteristic of the persons is recognized, while in the principle (λόγος) the invariable that is characteristic of the natural act.[21]

An appreciation of the analogy of human acting, based on the analogy of human being emerges here, tightly bound to the analogy of the concept of ἕξις. The latter, in truth, as human faculty adapts itself to accept the Christo-Pneumatological gift of God that aims at the univocal divinization of man "transforming man into divine likeness, analogically, that is in correspondence to the extent to which each is capable."[22]

It is only in the light of an analogical realization of the purpose, carried by the analogical sense of the concept of ἕξις that an understanding of divinization can ultimately go beyond a purely metaphorical or psychological understanding.

τὸ δὲ τῶν ἀνθρώπων φύσει σωζόμενον ταυτὸν οὐκ ἂν εἴη ποτὲ τὸ φύσει σῶζον, καὶ τὸ φύσει σωζόμενον· κἂν εἰς ἀμφοτέρων σκοπός, ἡ σωτηρία τῶν ὅλων καθέστηκεν· ὑπὸ μὲν τοῦ Θεοῦ προβεβλημένη· ὑπὸ δὲ τῶν ἁγίων προηρημένη. (*Opusc.*, 1, PG 91, 25 A-B).

[20] τρόπῳ τῷ κατὰ τὴν κίνησιν οὐ μία πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἡ θέλησις (*Th. Pol.*, 1, PG 91, 25 A).

[21] Ὡς γάρ τι ὢν προηγουμένως, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὡς τις ἕκαστος ἡμῶν ἐνεργεῖ· τουτέστιν, ὡς ἄνθρωπος· ὡς δέ τις, οἷον Παῦλος ἢ Πέτρος, τὸν τῆς ἐνεργείας σχηματίζει τρόπον, ἐνδόσει τυχὸν ἢ ἐπιδόσει, οὕτως ἢ ἐκεῖνος ὑπ' αὐτοῦ κατὰ γνώμην τυποῦμενος. Ὅθεν ἐν μὲν τῷ τρόπῳ τὸ παρηλλαγμένον τῶν προσώπων κατὰ τὴν πρᾶξιν γνωρίζεται· ἐν δὲ τῷ λόγῳ, τὸ τῆς φυσικῆς ἀπαράλλακτον ἐνεργείας (*Opusc.*,10, PG 91, 137 A).

[22] Πάντας ἀναλόγως καθὼς ἕκαστός ἐστιν αὐτῆς δεκτικὸς μεταποιοῦσα πρὸς τὴν θείαν ὁμοίωσιν (*QThal.* 61, CCSG 22, 59, 247-249, PG 90, 613 B).

> And finally, after all these mediations, uniting created nature to uncreated nature in love (Oh! The wonder of the philanthropy of God for us!), he shows it to be one and the same according to the habit of grace, reciprocally penetrating all entirely in God, becoming all that God is, except in the identity of being.[23]

It has become obvious that the divinization is carried out where God's action encounters the freedom of the human person:

> It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me(Gal 2: 20). Do not let yourselves be troubled by these words. I do not speak of a negation of the autonomy of the exercise of freedom, but rather of a stabilized and unwavering setting within nature, which means a departure from the *gnomic* will, so that we can receive also our moving whence we receive our being. Just as an image that elevates itself to its archetype, or the seal that perfectly fits into the engraving of the mold, and no longer has to be transported elsewhere, or cannot, or to speak more clearly and with greater truth, cannot want to, being seized by the divine act (ἐνέργεια) or, rather, having become god by divinization, full of joy in ecstasy by the grace of the Spirit.[24]

The personalized way of a "stabilized" will of divinization, indeed, takes its cues from the way "will" was formed in Jesus Christ. In particular, the analysis of the decisive choice of Jesus, who in the drama of Gethsemane was subjected to a process of re-adjustment of his will to the mission given to him, shows that, in certain cases, the capital question "what should I do?—the second of the three questions that, ac-

[23] καὶ τέλος ἐπὶ πᾶσι τούτοις, καὶ κτιστὴν φύσιν τῇ ἀκτίστῳ δι' ἀγάπης ἑνώσας (...) ἕν καὶ ταὐτὸν δείξειε κατὰ τὴν ἕξιν τῆς χάριτος, ὅλος ὅλῳ περιχωρήσας ὁλικῶς τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ γενόμενος πᾶν εἴ τί πέρ ἐστιν ὁ Θεός, χωρὶς τῆς κατ' οὐσίαν ταὐτότητος, καὶ ὅλον αὐτὸν ἀντιλαβών ἑαυτοῦ τὸν Θεόν, καὶ τῆς ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὸν Θεὸν ἀναβάσεως οἷον ἔπαθλον αὐτὸν μονώτατον κτησάμενος τὸν Θεόν, ὡς τέλος τῆς τῶν κινουμένων κινήσεως, καὶ στάσιν βάσιμόν τε καὶ ἀκίνητον τῶν ἐπ' αὐτὸν φερομένων, καὶ παντὸς ὅρου καὶ θεσμοῦ καὶ νόμου, λόγου τε καὶ νοῦ, καὶ φύσεως ὅρον καὶ πέρας ἀόριστόν τε καὶ ἄπειρον ὄντα (*Ambig. Io.*, 41, *PG* 91, 1308 B).

[24] Μὴ ταραττέτω δὲ ὑμᾶς τὸ λεγόμενον. Οὐ γὰρ ἀναίρεσιν τοῦ αὐτεξουσίου γένεσθαί φημι, ἀλλὰ θέσιν μᾶλλον τὴν κατὰ φύσιν παγίαν τε καὶ ἀμετάθετον, ἤγουν ἐκχώρησιν γνωμικήν, ἵν' ὅθεν ἡμῖν ὑπάρχει τὸ εἶναι καὶ τὸ κινεῖσθαι λαβεῖν ποθήσωμεν, ὡς τῆς εἰκόνος ἐνελθούσης πρὸς τὸ ἀρχέτυπον, καὶ σφραγίδος δίκην ἐκτυπώματι καλῶς ἡρμοσμένης τῷ ἀρχετύπῳ, καὶ ἄλλοθι φέρεσθαι μήτ' ἐχούσης λοιπὸν μήτε δυναμένης, ἢ σαφέστερον εἰπεῖν καὶ ἀληθέστερον, μήτε βούλεσθαι δυναμένης, ὡς τῆς θείας ἐπειλημμένης ἐνεργείας, μᾶλλον δὲ Θεὸς τῇ θεώσει γεγενημένης, καὶ πλέον ἡδομένης τῇ ἐκστάσει τῶν φυσικῶς ἐπ' αὐτῆς καὶ ὄντων καὶ νοουμένων, διὰ τὴν ἐκνικήσασαν αὐτὴν χάριν τοῦ Πνεύματος (*Ambig. Io.*, 7, *PG* 91, 1076 B-C).

cording to Kant, sum up the whole of philosophy[25]—bears features that can find an adequate response only in an intimate relationship with God, just as expressed in the prayer " that your will be done" (Mt 26,42; Lk 22,42). Jesus manifests that the discernment effected in the garden of Gethsemane led him to recognize the divine will, addressed to him personally, a message delivered in this way: "an angel appeared unto Him from Heaven" (Lk 22, 43).

Although the very decision that Jesus was confronted with was, without any doubt, a singular case and non-transferable as such to the type of conflict that man commonly meets in life, it is still revelatory of the phenomena that every life of a believer is set in front of personal choices that go beyond the merely ethical, though certainly tied to the ethical, as they are not due to the simple moral choice between good and evil. This category of decisions includes, for example, all the choices that concern the state of life, marriage and the vow of chastity, a profession to exercise, the state of life, and the investment of large sums of money. The reference to this area of decision-making, once more, gives way to the necessary distinction between ἕξις as virtue, on the one hand, and ἕξις as theological virtues or evangelical counsel, on the other. If you can point to virtues through explanations articulated in general terms, referring to moral systems and rules, the properly theological sense of ἕξις is a disposition acquired in the relationship with God that includes a spiritual discernment, based on a very personal "calling" that solicits the pursuit of a profound consistency of one's being, together with one's desires and one's actions. In other words, a sort of freedom for γνώμη that is truly God-like:

> It is said—says Maximus—that God and man are examples for each other and that God becomes human in his love for the man as much as man, empowered by God, becomes divine love.[26]

[25] Cf. I. Kant, *Logik*, AA IX, 25.

[26] Φασὶ γὰρ ἀλλήλων εἶναι παραδείγματα τὸν Θεὸν καὸ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, καὶ τοσοῦτον τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τὸν Θεὸν διὰ φιλανθρωπίαν ἀνθρωπίζεσθαι, ὅσον ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἑαυτὸν τῷ Θεῷ δι' ἀγάπης δυνηθεὶς ἀπεθέωσε (*Ambig. Io.*, 10, *PG* 91, 1113 B-C)

III

Body, Pathos, Love

Saint Maximus on the Mystery of Marriage and the Body: a Reconsideration

Adam G. Cooper

When I first set out to study Maximus' theology of the body and deification for my PhD thirteen years ago, I had no idea what I would discover. I actually knew very little about him, having read only the *Four Centuries on Charity* in a copy of the *Philokalia* borrowed from my father. I struggled with his Greek and was largely ignorant of the vast philosophical background presupposed in many of his metaphysical discussions. I often say that if I had known at the start what I know about Maximus now, I would never have had the courage to begin studying him in the first place.

But despite my relative ignorance, I found myself adapting well to the task at hand, helped along by wonderful colleagues and a learned supervisor, as well as by my intuitive adoption of what you might call a working hermeneutic, with which I approached all of Maximus' writings as with a kind of presupposition. This hermeneutic can basically be summed up in a statement of belief: I believed that Maximus was an incarnational theologian. That is, I believed that Maximus shared with all Orthodox Christians a profound sense that the Incarnation of the Son of God is the key that unlocks the mystery of everything, and that in, with, and under this saving reality there emerges in the universe and history a transformative force and renewed order of meaning. Of course, I understood that I could not simply assume that I knew in advance what Maximus believed about the body and its role in God's creative and redemptive and deifying economies. After all, it is the task of historical scholarship to bring to light the many differences and developments in

thought that score and sometimes even break up the smooth surface of Christian history, challenging the sometimes romantically tinged view that the faith remains timelessly static and constant, aloof from the exigencies of history. At the same time, as Henri de Lubac once remarked, an overly positivistic historical method risks obscuring "certain great constants, certain unities maintained at a deep level."[1] While I wanted to let Maximus challenge and correct me where necessary, I also felt that—despite the fact that he was a late antique Byzantine ascetic athlete, profoundly cultured and erudite, while I was a modern western spiritual flab, reared in a culture deeply marred by individualism and materialism—I had to believe that we shared more than we differed, even in what we thought about the body, and that my incarnationally-informed sense of the body's meaning and importance would somehow be shared by Maximus as well.

How did my expectations turn out? Very fruitfully, in fact. I found that, according to Maximus, material embodiment functions as the primary mode of divine revelation, that the human body belongs to the natural composite unity of the human person, that while it is through the body that human beings are especially susceptible to spiritual disorder, both the senses and the affections play a crucial role in the restitution of spiritual harmony and the ascent to deifying union with God. True enough, the body in this life for Maximus always retains a certain ambiguity. By reason of their connection with sensual idolatry, sexual differentiation, marriage, and procreation are always tinged with a potentially negative aspect. Yet they are also created gifts of God, and not to be despised. For the Christian, marriage offers a legitimate vocation to holiness, while procreative love symbolises a new order of spiritual begetting whereby Christ the Word is incarnate in the virtues, which cannot be lived apart from sanctified desire and embodied love.

In 2005, I published the fruit of my doctoral research on the place of the body in Maximus' theology of deification with the title, *The Body in Saint Maximus the Confessor: Holy Flesh, Wholly Deified*. But as I continued to research more widely in the Fathers, and particularly as I took up an academic position in an institute devoted to the contempo-

[1] Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis* vol. 2, tr. E. M. Macierowski (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000 [orig. 1959]), 209.

rary nuptial mystery theology as it has emerged from the *ressourcement* movement in the mid-twentieth century right down to the magisterial teaching of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI, I came to sense that my initial findings on St Maximus' theology of the body may have been overly coloured here and there not only by my own enthusiasm but also by my assumption of doctrinal continuity.[2] I began to sense that a great many of the Fathers, including Maximus, laboured within a cultural and philosophical framework within which the body and sexual difference sat somewhat uneasily, even while at the same time they were affirmed in Christian faith and practice as crucially pregnant with significance. Moreover, in as much as the Fathers prioritize a universal concept of human nature, they are unable to reflect positively on the metaphysical and theological significance of the male and female sexual difference and the possibility that the image of God may be reflected precisely in this communional complementarity.

There are of course exceptions. One need only recall John Chrysostom's remark concerning the conjugal act: "The two have become one. This is not an empty symbol. They have not become the image of anything on earth, but of God Himself."[3] We think also of the little-known passage by the seventh century figure Anastasius of Sinai, in which he raises profound critical questions about the adequacy of approaches that locate the image of God in human beings solely on the spiritual and immaterial plane, and instead tentatively proposes a trinitarian interpretation of the image of God as it is reflected bodily and inter-relationally in the familial communion constituted by Adam, Eve, and Seth.[4] Yet it seems to me that the great Aristotelian revival of the thirteenth century occident marks a definite advance in the theoretical elaboration of an all-encompassing framework within which a Chris-

[2] For a lucid (though eventually unsympathetic) account of the emergence of nuptial mystery theology in the twentieth century, see Fergus Kerr, *Twentieth Century Catholic Theologians: From Neoscholasticism to Nuptial Mysticism* (London: Blackwell, 2007).

[3] *Homily* 12 (on Colossians 4:18), in St John Chrysostom, *On Marriage and Family Life*, tr. Catherine P. Roth and David Anderson (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003), 75.

[4] Karl Heinz Uthemann (ed.), *Anastasii Sinaitae: Sermones duo in constitutionem hominis secundum imaginem Dei* (CCSG 12, Turnhout: Brepols, 1985), 4-11 (cf. PG 44, 1329B-1332A). For further discussion of this text, see my study, "Were the Fathers Proponents of a Familial *Imago Trinitatis*?", in Doru Costache and Philip Kariatlis (eds.), *The Cappadocians: Proceedings from the St Andrew's Patristic Symposia 2009-2011* (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2012), 13-35.

tian theology of the body could be explored more easily. In his famous perception of the radical primacy of *esse* over *essentia*, his synthesis of Aristotelian substantialism with a Neoplatonic metaphysics of participation, and his creative interweaving of hylomorphic theory, a Dionysian metaphysics of eros, and an understanding of person as the most profound and generous actualisation of being, Thomas Aquinas opened the way for a more "ecstatic" and inter-relational metaphysics of the body within theological anthropology.[5] But I would argue that it is not until the twentieth century, and especially through the development of Christian personalism (Blondel, von Hildebrand, Stein, Mounier, Marcel, Mouroux, Nédoncelle, Wojtyla), Trinitarian anthropology (Barth, von Balthasar, Zizioulas, Scola, Ouellet), and a metaphysics of difference, kenosis, and love (Siewerth, von Balthasar, Norris Clarke, D. L. Schindler, D. C. Schindler), that the Christian theology of the body has been able to be articulated in terms adapted from a more amenable conceptual framework.[6]

But does this newly found conviction require a radical revision of my initial thesis? Any attempt at a radical revision would imply either that I did not accurately represent Maximus' theology of the body on

[5] On the *esse/essentia* distinction in Aquinas, see Etienne Gilson, *L'être et l'essence* (Paris: Vrin, 1948). On the metaphysics of participation, see Cornelio Fabro, *Participation et causalité selon S. Thomas d'Aquin* (Louvain: University of Louvain, 1961); W. Norris Clarke, "The Meaning of Participation in St. Thomas," in id., *Explorations in Metaphysics: Being—God—Person* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 89-101; John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 2000). On hylomorphic anthropology and the metaphysics of eros, see Fran O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas* (Leiden: Brill, 1992); G. J. McAleer, *Ecstatic Morality and Sexual Politics: A Catholic and Antitotalitarian Theory of the Body* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005).

[6] Christian personalism found profound inspiration in the 1923 appearance of Martin Buber's *I and Thou*. One might also mention Frederick D. Wilhelmsen, *The Metaphysics of Love* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1962), who prefaced his book thus: "These studies in the metaphysics of love are offered the reader as meditations written by a man who believes that agape lies at the heart of all being, and who believes that the best approach to agape is by way either of the theology of the Blessed Trinity or the ontology of human existence within history." Wilhelmsen refers to the relatively unknown Spanish philosopher Xavier Zubiri (1898-1983), who proposed an erotic and inter-personal metaphysics of being. On the importance of Gustav Siewerth (1903-63) for the seminal development of a Trinitarian metaphysics of difference, see Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theologic 2: Truth of God* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2004), 179-83; Andrzej Wiercinski, *Inspired Metaphysics? Gustav Siewerth's Hermeneutic Reading of the Onto-Theological Tradition* (Toronto: The Hermeneutic Press, 2003).

its own terms, or else that I have now arrived at a fundamentally different judgement about its ongoing usefulness and validity. But neither of these options apply. Instead I find myself returning to the Maximian texts in question with a deeper respect for their limits, for what they do not say and what we should not expect them to say, and yet as an always rich and challenging source for contemporary developments in theological anthropology. Moreover, these texts provide an abiding touchstone by which to test the legitimacy of various claims that either reject his theology as hopelessly monistic or anti-materialist, or else invoke his authority in support of various revisionist developments. I would like to divide the discussion which follows into two parts. In light of the popularity of such topics as the body and sexuality in recent patristic scholarship, and with the hyper-sexualisation of contemporary culture in view, I would first like to re-examine a number of key texts in the Maximian corpus that explicitly touch on the question of marriage and sexual difference and offer some interpretative clarification. Having done so, I would like to move on to consider some of the main challenges in contemporary theology and to propose a number of possible avenues for response that require us to go beyond the limits of Maximus' own theology.

Part I: Clarifications

a) Centuries on Love 2.30

In *Centuries on Love* 2.30 Maximus describes how the bodily reality of sexual difference is regarded by the person who has become perfect in love. Such a person, he says, pays no attention (*ouk epistatai*)[7] to the difference (*diaphoran*) between male and female (*inter alia*), but fixing his attention (*apoblepomenos*) upon "the one nature of human beings," he regards all equally and is equally disposed towards all. For with him, "there is not Greek and Jew, nor male and female, nor slave and free," but Christ is all in all.

[7] He may perceive the difference, but he does not make it a basis for partial or differential treatment.

This moral application of the principle enunciated by St Paul in Galatians 3:28 (often, as here, conflated with Colossians 3:11) is common in the Confessor's writings and relies on three related principles. First, it locates human nature, created in the image of God, in the soul and not the body. Second, it identifies Christ as a universal anthropological archetype from whom all human beings receive their definitive identity from God. Third, it finds the paradigm of perfect love in God's equal love for all human beings, no matter what their particular bodily state or moral condition.[8]

From this we are prompted to ask Maximus whether perfect love is possible within the context of the conjugal vocation. If the attainment of perfect love requires the Christian to relate to other people on the basis of the one universal nature shared in common by all human beings, holding it in focused contemplation in abstraction from all such particular accidents as bodily sexual difference, how can a Christian husband and wife also strive to attain such love without ceasing to relate to one another as sexually distinct persons?

Before we try to answer this question, let us turn to another text a little further on to see if it can contribute to our understanding of this problem.

b) Centuries on Love 2.33

Christian tradition has always affirmed the inherent connection between the so-called unitive and procreative dimensions of marriage. But within the broad parameters of this tradition there has sometimes been disagreement over the question whether conjugal intercourse is legitimate apart from a positive intention to procreate. In one of the most well-known Maximian texts on this matter, *Centuries on Love* 2.33, it seems that Maximus simply affirms the view that for spouses to desire sexual relations without also intending to procreate is to give rein to an evil passion that runs contrary to reason. But a closer examination of the structure of this passage, by comparison with the paragraph before it, reveals a more complex and subtle doctrine. The two paragraphs, 2.32 and 2.33, are structured in parallel triadic form:

[8] See, e.g., *Carit.* 1.25; 1.61; 1.71.

Motivations towards good	Motivations towards evil
Natural inclinations	Passions
Holy angels	Demons
Good will	Bad will

According to this schema, "the passions" (*ta pathe*) are structured antithetically alongside "the natural inclinations" (*ta physika spermata*). The natural inclinations are those innate dynamisms at work in human beings that spontaneously propel them towards doing good. Maximus gives two examples: the moral inclination to do unto others as we would have them do unto us and the spontaneous stirring of compassion when we see someone in need or distress. One could say that these natural inclinations express an inner logos or rationale proper to human nature. By contrast, the passions propel us towards evil insofar as they motivate us to desire something "contrary to reason." This phrase "contrary to reason" (*para logon*) holds the key to understanding the three examples Maximus provides. The first is the desire for food "outside the proper time or need" The second is the desire for a woman "outside the purpose of procreation or who is not lawfully ours." The third is when we are enraged or grieved unreasonably towards one who has offended or hurt us. We can schematise the repeated use of the preposition *para* in these sentences as follows:

We desire →	παρὰ λόγον
When we want food →	παρὰ τὸν καιρὸν ἢ παρὰ τὴν χρείαν
When we want a woman →	παρὰ τὸν σκοπὸν τῆς παιδοποιίας
When we are enraged →	παρὰ τὸ εἰκός

What do these structural features tell us? I think there are two important points to be made. First, from the fact that Maximus contrasts the passions with the natural inclinations we may discern an implicit affirmation of certain affective and emotional dynamisms inherent in the human constitution that, when properly ordered, are not in themselves contrary to reason but are in fact expressive of the *logos* of human

nature. Second, from the negative fact that desire for a woman outside of the purpose of procreation is contrary to reason, the inference can be drawn that as long as a man's desire for sexual intimacy includes and does not deliberately exclude this *skopos* of procreation, it expresses a legitimate *logos* or rationale, not perhaps the primordial *logos* of human nature, but a provisional *logos* on account of which God introduced sexual difference.[9] Of course, other factors need to be taken into consideration, including the Confessor's own question whether or not the man and woman concerned are lawfully married. But ultimately it is Maximus' view that the desire of a man for a woman propels him towards evil only if and when that desire runs contrary to certain goals and conditions. In itself the desire is not evil or contrary to reason. Thus it seems that we are justified in invoking Maximus' authority in order to predicate to sexual desire a certain inner rationale or logic, a logic which at the very least consists in some formal sense in its procreative finality. In light of these comments, it is possible to propose a third table in which we schematise the operation of desire not negatively but positively, that is, as it moves us in a direction not "contrary to reason" (*para logon*) but "in keeping with reason" (*kata logon*):

We desire →	κατὰ λόγον
When we want food →	κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν ἢ κατὰ τὴν χρείαν
When we want a woman →	κατὰ τὸν σκοπὸν τῆς παιδοποιίας
When we are enraged →	κατὰ τὸ εἰκός

With this analysis we are one step closer to resolving the issue raised earlier, namely, whether a Christian husband and wife can actualise perfect love within the context of their conjugal relations. But there are still two more texts we need still to consider.

c) Quaestiones et dubia 183

In this passage Maximus comments on the meaning of the single denarius in the parable of the workers in the vineyard in Matthew 20:1-16, given that the callings and dispositions of the various workers are different.[10] His exposition confirms the suggestion proposed just now that he does not simply hold to the view that marital intercourse outside the express intention to procreate is necessarily sinful or problematic.

Maximus relates the view of certain unnamed holy fathers who take the one denarius to signify self-control (σωφροσύνη), which can be exercised in different levels or degrees. The Confessor lists five in an ascending order of superiority. The first and most basic level at which self-control may be exercised is by the man who, having his own wife, simply remains faithful to her. "By staying with her, he preserves self-control." The second level, "better than the first," is found in the married person who "uses the freedom of the law, but not continuously," that is, who sometimes refrains from intercourse even when it may be perfectly legitimate. The third level is found in the married person who only engages in intercourse "successively" (ἐκ διαδοχῆς) for the sole purpose of procreation. Fourth is the married person who, "after accomplishing the birth of one or two children," refrains from intercourse thereafter. And finally, "superior to all these," there is the virgin who refrains from marriage altogether out of "love for the Lord." Maximus concludes the exposition by indicating that the entire schema holds true for the other virtues as well.[11]

Clearly this passage regards celibacy as a superior vocation to marriage, and, within the scope of the married vocation, regards exclusively procreative intercourse as superior to a more basic use of intercourse as a means of preserving marital fidelity, even if the latter represents a perfectly valid form of self-control.

Yet we may be permitted to draw one or two qualifying observations from details in the Matthean parable itself on which the five-fold schema is based. Maximus and his interlocutor are both attentive to the problem of singularity and difference in the parable. Each of the five groups receives its calling or vocation from the one landowner. Each bears a different burden; each manifests a different disposition; yet each receives the same reward. The one denarius in Maximus' interpretation signifies not the final reward of eternal life, but the one virtue of self-control, given in

[9] In *Ambig.Io.* 41 (PG 91, 1305CD) Maximus clearly teaches that sexual difference "in no way depends on the divine plan for the generation of man." I am grateful to Jacob van Sickle for insisting that I keep the logos of human nature and the logos of sexual difference distinct.

[10] *QD* 183, 1-19 (CCSG 10, 124-5).

[11] *QD* 183, 18-19 (CCSG 10, 125).

this life, and which is exercised in different ways and with different levels of intensity and value. For Maximus, these differences are reflected in a hierarchy of vocational forms based on the degree to which marital sexual intimacy features in each form and the relative depth of self-control involved respectively. But in the Gospel the parable concludes with Jesus' pronouncement of a reversal of the typical order of merit or reward, on account of the divine generosity: "the last will be first, and the first will be last" (20:16). I would suggest that this final statement, and the expression of envy in the parable which provokes it, precludes us from any strict insistence upon a scale of value in which marriage, simply understood and faithfully lived, is regarded as intrinsically inferior to other apparently more rigorous vocational forms of self-control or virtue. And indeed, as Maximus indicates, the defining characteristic which gives celibacy its value is not sexual abstinence *per se*, but "love for the Lord." The decisive question remains then whether such love can be perfected also in marriage.

d) Difficulties to John 10.31

The crowning importance of this passage for the proper appraisal of Maximus' doctrine on marriage and spiritual life has been highlighted by Doru Costache in a soon-to-be-published study.[12] In it Maximus presents a series of eight typological reflections by which he attempts to unravel the significance of Moses and Elijah's appearance alongside Jesus on the Mountain of Transfiguration. In each case, Moses and Elijah typify a pair of contrasting yet related elements, which find their unifying center in the Incarnate Word. The eight types or figures are as follows:

Moses	**The Word**	**Elijah**
legal word		prophetic word
wisdom		kindness
knowledge		education

[12] Doru Costache, "Living Above Gender: Insights from St Maximus the Confessor," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* (2013), forthcoming. I am indebted to Costache's study for alerting me to the significance of this text.

praxis		contemplation
marriage		**celibacy**
death		life
time		nature
sensible		intelligible

Our focus is limited in the first instance to the fifth typological pair according to which Moses and Elijah respectively symbolise the mysteries of marriage and celibacy. Through the appearance of Moses and Elijah on either side of Jesus on the mountain, writes Maximus, the Apostles

> learned that the mysteries concerning marriage and celibacy are from the Word: through Moses, in that he was not prevented by marriage from becoming a lover of the divine glory, and through Elijah, in that he remained utterly pure from marital union. In this way God the Word declared that those who by reason keep these things straight in accordance with the laws divinely laid down concerning them are mystically introduced to Himself [οἷα τοῦ Λόγου καὶ Θεοῦ τοὺς λόγῳ ταῦτα ἰθύνοντας, κατὰ τοὺς θειωδῶς περὶ αὐτῶν κειμένους νόμους, ἑαυτῷ μυστικῶς εἰσποιεῖσθαι κηρύττοντος].[13]

We note first of all that both marriage and celibacy are said to contain "mysteries," and that these mysteries in some way derive from the Word (παρὰ τῷ Λόγῳ) and mystically lead to him (ἑαυτῷ μυστικῶς εἰσποιεῖσθαι).[14] Second, we note that the special lesson to be learned from Moses is that his marriage was no obstacle to his spiritually erotic search for and encounter with the divine glory. This claim comes over as a surprise. We might well have expected Maximus to express the traditional conviction, already articulated in the New Testament, that marriage divides a Christian's interests: "A married man is concerned about the affairs of this world, how he should please his wife, and his interests are divided" (1 Cor 7:33-34; cf Lk 18:29). Instead, Maximus allows that being a lover of one's wife and being a lover (ἐραστὴς) of the

[13] *Ambig.Joh.* 10, PG 91, 1161D. This last clause is especially difficult to understand, let alone translate.

[14] Louth's translation misses this second point, by not accounting for the word *einai*. See Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (London: Routledge, 1996), 130.

divine glory need not involve mutually exclusive pursuits.[15] Moses' conjugal state and vocation did not dissipate his yearning to behold the Lord in his glory.[16] The third point to note, also indicated by Costache, is that the successful fulfilment of either vocation, marriage or celibacy, a fulfilment which leads to Christ, depends upon the governing role of reason (λόγῳ) and the laws (νόμους) established by God.

So far, our analysis has been limited to just this fifth pair in the typological schema. As such it yields a very positive portrait of marriage. Both vocations, marriage and celibacy, find their unity and goal in orientation to Christ the Word. Both are legitimate paths to union with his glory. To this end, Costache appears correct in concluding that in this passage Maximus explicitly favours neither marriage nor celibacy over the other, believing "in the possibility of walking the spiritual path irrespective of gender and social circumstances."

However, when we take in the wider context and compare this fifth pair to the other pairs—a comparison which, given the structural unity of the entire typological schema, seems more than appropriate—it seems a number of qualifications to this positive portrait are called for. Moses is a type not only of marriage, but also of the legal word, wisdom, knowledge, praxis, death, time, and the sensible realm. Elijah is a type not only of celibacy, but also of the prophetic word, kindness, education, contemplation, life, nature, and the intelligible realm. If we accept some kind of mutually illuminating relation between marriage and the other categories typified by Moses, and between celibacy and the other categories typified by Elijah, then it seems that Maximus' depiction of marriage in this passage can be fully understood only in the light of its association with the realm of time, work, struggle, and death. This stands in contrast to celibacy, which the Confessor associates with the realm of eternity, rest, contemplation, and life.

True enough, the appearance of Moses and Elijah together with Christ is for Maximus proof that "the Word is the Lord of both life and death," and that "no one at all is dead with him."[17] Moses the married preacher of divine law may have died and missed out on "entering bodily into the promised rest,"[18] while Elijah the celibate preacher of divine mercy may have been translated directly to heaven,[19] but to both it has been granted to appear alongside the Incarnate Word in his transfigured glory.[20] At the same time, it seems appropriate to attend to the way Maximus structures the marriage-celibacy pair within the entire eight-fold typology, noting especially the way he concludes the typologies with the contrast between the sensible and the intelligible. "Of these Moses offers the meaning of the sensible, that it is subject to change and corruption, as his history of it shows, declaring its origination and death...." Elijah, by contrast, "offers the meaning of the intelligible," which "does not await an end of its existence defined by corruption, for it is naturally imperishable, having received this from God Who willed to create it as such."[21] Understood in light of its structural and symbolic connection with the sensible, marriage belongs to the realm of corruption and death, or in the words of St Paul, to "the form of this world which is passing away" (1 Cor 7:31). Celibacy, on the other hand, belongs to the world of eternity, to the world of the kingdom and the resurrection where, in the words of Jesus, we shall be "like the angels" (Lk 20:36).

From this, I think it is fair to conclude that if we limit our interpretation of this text only to what Maximus says about marriage and celibacy in the fifth typological pair, then we can say that he explicitly favours neither marriage nor celibacy over the other. But if we widen our interpretation of the fifth typological pair to take into account the context of the entire parallel schema, then celibacy clearly emerges as superior. Whichever interpretation we prefer, nonetheless, two points remain constant and undisputable: (1) marriage is a mystery whose ultimate meaning is found in Christ; and (2) being married does not in itself prevent a person from becoming a lover of the divine glory.

I would like to examine one more key passage in detail, before offering some summary remarks to conclude this first section.

[15] In this respect Maximus echoes the view of Clement of Alexandria who argued that "both the married man and his wife" are able "to care for the things of the Lord together." *Stromateis* III, 12.

[16] Implicitly Maximus seems to suggest that the Apostles appropriated this same lesson in their own married situations.

[17] *Ambig.Ioh.* 10.31 (PG 91, 1161D-1164A).

[18] *Ambig.Ioh.* 10.31 (PG 91, 1164B).

[19] Cf. *Ambig.Ioh.* 10.31 (PG 91, 1161C).

[20] Cf.: "The types of the mysteries exist in relation to and are referred to the Word... and are brought into agreement with it." *Ambig.Ioh.* 10.31 (PG 91, 1164A).

[21] *Ambig.Io.* 10.31 (PG 91, 1164D-1165A).

e) Quaestiones et dubia I.3

Until recently, this brief exegetical reflection on Psalm 50:7 (LXX) has been regarded as one of Maximus' more radical and even embarrassing statements on the relation between sin and procreation.[22] However, as I have recently argued elsewhere, it is quite possible that the text is not original to Maximus at all.[23] The reason is that it corresponds almost word for word with an exegetical fragment on the Psalms attributed to none other than St Athanasius of Alexandria. But the question of the real authorship of these fragments is complicated, and apparently not yet resolved. Whoever really wrote them, they were only collated into a single manuscript by Nicetas of Heraclea in the eleventh century.[24]

Setting aside the question of authorship for the moment, what does the passage say? First of all it affirms that the generation of human beings by means of sexual procreation originally lay outside the Creator's purpose. We have encountered this idea already in Maximus' writings. It was Adam's "disregard for the law given to him by God" that caused marriage to be introduced as a provisional law of propagation. As a result all of Adam's descendants have fallen under their forefather's condemnation. This is what the Psalmist means when he speaks of being "brought forth in iniquity."

The commentary then turns to consider the second clause from the Psalm, "in sin my mother conceived me." Taking "my mother" to mean Eve, the passage offers an unusual interpretation linking the biblical word *kissao* (to conceive) with *orgao*, meaning to desire sexual pleasure. The play on words exploits the whole idea of "swelling" and even of the "heat" associated with passionate sexual arousal. My translation hardly does it justice:

[22] *QD* I, 3 (CCSG 10, 138-9).

[23] See Adam G. Cooper, "Sex and the Transmission of Sin: Patristic Exegesis of Psalm 50:5 (LXX)", in *Meditations of the Heart: The Psalms in Early Christian Thought and Practice: Essays in Honour of Andrew Louth,* eds. A. Andreopoulos, A. Casiday, C. Harrison (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 77-95.

[24] See PG 27.240. Declerck details the different manuscript families of such catenae on the Psalms (pp. clxxiii – cxcv), but does not query Maximian authorship. In one of the many manuscripts, next to Psalm 50:7, there is a marginal extract attributed to Maximus which corresponds to a portion of *QD* I, 3 (see José H. Declerck, *Maximi Confessoris quaestiones et dubia* [CCSG 10, Turnhout: Brepols, 1982], clxxxv). See further M. Geerard (ed.), *Clavis Patrum Graecorum* vol. ii (Turnhout, 1974), 28; Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* vol. 3 (Allen, Texas, nd), 39.

> And the phrase "*and in sin did my mother conceive me*" indicates that Eve, the first mother of us all, conceived sin, in that she desired sensual pleasure. This is why we also fall under the condemnation of our mother, and so we say we were "conceived" in sin.

Note the twofold expansion upon the biblical word *kissao*. First, sin is regarded as the direct product of Eve's conception (ἐκίσσησεν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν). Second, this conception of sin is explicated further in terms of her passionate desire for sensual pleasure (ὥσπερ ὀργῶσα τὴν ἡδονήν).

Supplementing the Psalm verse with both the Genesis account and with metaphors derived from his own theological repertoire, the author of this brief commentary has us envision Eve's sexual craving as the generative cause of universal condemnation. Moreover, this original preference for sensual pleasure, which parallels Adam's disobedience of the divine command, apparently remains an active force at work in every act of sexual passion.

Concluding remarks

In this first section, so far I have examined a number of key texts from the Maximian corpus that can be seen to bear directly on the question to what extent the affirmation of sexual difference and the exercise of conjugal relations may feature positively in authentic Christian spiritual existence. What are the key points that stand out? Since I am not a philologist, I shall leave aside the text critical question whether the views expressed in the lattermost passage are Maximus' own. From the other texts, we can adduce three main points. First, perfect love takes its measure from the universal love of God for all people, without regard for distinctions of sex, race, status, or moral quality. Second, the inclination toward sexual intimacy, when rightly deployed, expresses a legitimate *logos* or rationale, not the *logos* of human nature generically considered, but the provisional *logos* specific to our sexually differentiated state. Third, faithful commitment to the marital vocation does not hinder an authentic spiritual orientation towards holiness. Marriage is relativized by the Mystery of Christ, yet it also receives its true meaning and purpose from him.

But are these points enough to exonerate the Confessor from the charge once laid down by Hans von Balthasar that in Maximus' theology sexuality is "too overloaded by the tragedy and the despairing dialectic of

original sin to find a positive place among the syntheses achieved by Christ"?[25] And it is not only the awkward comments on Psalm 50 that he has in mind. In the end, said von Balthasar, Maximus considers sexual desire and the passions as a sort of "'sacrament of sin,' in that even here an external gesture, in itself neither good nor evil, has become an 'efficacious sign' of sin."[26]

Unfortunately, the one main text which von Balthasar quotes in order to mitigate his own charge is not from Maximus, but from the scholia on Dionysius the Areopagite by John of Scythopolis.[27] But even if Maximus did believe that sexual intercourse and procreation bear within themselves the operative power of sin and death, that does not exhaust the meaning of sexuality for him. If it did, the specifically procreative aspect of the Incarnation would lack all recapitulatory significance. Despite the limits of his immediately monastic milieu and mentality—von Balthasar speaks of his monastic metaphysics—Maximus seems to me still too deeply saturated with the Irenaean theological culture to think like that. On the one hand, he teaches in *Ambiguum* 41 that sexual differentiation "according to the primordial *logos*, in no way depends on the divine plan for human generation."[28] By the transcendent mode of his virginal conception and birth, Christ has restored to human nature the "other way" of being generated (i.e., without sexual passion and male seed), thereby "expelling the difference and division of nature into male and female."[29] In his *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer*, the Confessor negatively allegorises the "male and female" of Galatians 3:28 as anger and lust respectively. Lust would have us regard sensual pleasures as more preferable than spiritual realities, while anger destroys the free exercise of reason. These vices can only be displaced through humility and meekness, through which Christ is mysteriously born anew in us and grants the soul his own God-like configuration. The soul that begets Christ in this way becomes a virgin-mother who

[25] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor*, tr. Brian E. Daley (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2003 [from the 1988 3rd edition]), 204.

[26] Ibid., 199.

[27] *In De Div. Nom.* 4, PG 4.281AC, quoted by von Balthasar, op. cit., 200. On the attribution of the Dionysian scholia to John, see Paul Rorem and John C. Lamoreaux, *John of Scythopolis and the Dionysian Corpus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[28] *Ambig.Io.* 41, PG 91.1305C.

[29] *Ambig.Io.* 41, PG 91.1309A.

no longer bears "the marks of nature subject to corruption and generation in the relationship of male and female."[30]

On the other hand, Maximus teaches in *Ambiguum* 42 that "if marriage is evil, then the law of natural generation is also evil. And if the law of natural generation is evil, the one who created that nature and gave it its law of generation is evil as well."[31] Obviously this is a conclusion, and therefore a premise, that Maximus strongly rejects. Christ has made his own miraculous "conception" (*gennesis*) from a virgin the means of redeeming humanity's congenitally corrupted "generation" (*genesis*), a redemption personally realized for and participated in by others by baptismal insertion into his birth. This new mode of generation gives to the baptized a stable ontological foundation, from which alone a stable moral project can unfold. In this sacramental matrix all the sin-stricken pathos surrounding sexual procreation is healed.[32]

This two-sided perspective allows us to qualify Maximus' understanding of the "neither male nor female" in Galatians 3:28. For the Confessor, as Thunberg explains, "The relationship between these two forms of mankind which we now know is one marked by sin. But in Christ it is overcome through a birth—a sinless way of coming into existence—which has destroyed man's slavery to both lust and death."[33] This may sound as if the male-female difference is therefore to be abolished or rendered in either principle or practice null and void. But Thunberg correctly adds an important observation, in which he cites Maximus' famous three-tiered structure of the human trajectory: being, well-being, and eternal well-being. According to Maximus, the final unity of the resurrection, because it is already anticipated in this life through baptism, begins to unfold not in the last of these three dimensions but in the middle term, that of well-being. Among other things, this middle stage is marked by

[30] *Or. Dom.* (CCSG 334-361, 373-400). Thunberg notes that for Clement of Alexandria, "male and female" represent anger and concupiscence (a Philonic tradition), and should not be understood literally. Yet Clement believes that sexual differentiation is only physical, that spiritually there is no differentiation, and that the transcendence of sexual difference and the attainment of unity can be achieved through virtue. (Though he conceives this unified virtuous state in terms provided by more masculine than feminine qualities.) See Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 374.

[31] *Ambig.Io.* 41, PG 91.1340B.

[32] See *Ambig.Io.* 42, PG 91.1317AC; 91.1348A.

[33] Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 378.

the fact that it is the zone of the *vita practica*, the life of active Christian practice and human synergy with God, whereas the first and last stages are the zones of pure divine grace and human receptivity. Moreover, unlike the first stage, which concerns the principle of being, the middle stage concerns the mode of existence. This means that the transcending of the male-female difference is to take place at the level of ascetic action, not by any kind of in-principle negation of marriage or sexual difference *per se*, unless one is rash enough to exclude from them any *logos* or rationale in the economy of divine providence. And most importantly, this ascetic transcending or *anabasis* is for Maximus always a kind of *diabasis*: one transcends not by rising above but by penetrating within.[34] Drawing together the main elements in Maximus' teaching on this triadic structure, it is possible to schematize it as follows:[35]

By grace	By synergy	By grace
6th day	7th day	8th day
Conception	Baptism	Resurrection
Being	Well-being	Eternal well-being
Logos of being	Mode of existence	Mystery of deification

When we interpret Maximus' numerous comments on Galatians 3:28 and sexual difference in the light of this schema, we find that rather than expressing any kind of anti-sexual agenda, the negation of male and female in Christ confronts us with an existential and vocational challenge. In all our day-to-day dealings with one another, within which social and physical and temporal differences such as age or rank or gender or marital status are not without importance, we are called to give priority to the fact of our common humanity, to attend to the single principle that makes all of us human and thereby called in common to transform-

[34] This general ascetic principle has been demonstrated on the basis of Maximus' scriptural hermeneutics by Paul M. Blowers, *Exegesis and Spiritual Pedagogy in Maximus the Confessor: An Investigation of the* Quaestiones ad Thalassium (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991). See my discussion of this subject in *The Body in Saint Maximus: Holy Flesh, Wholly Deified* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 57-64.

[35] See Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 368-73. On the correspondence of the three days to other elements in the triad, see also Grigory Benevich, "The Sabbath in St. Maximus the Confessor," *Studi sull'Oriente Cristiano* 9/1 (2005), 63-80.

ing communion together with God in Christ. As Doru Costache summarizes, "the new vision" to which the baptized are called "consists in the contemplation of the particular categories of male and female through the lens of the general category represented by humankind.... On an existential and practical level the shift implied... leads to a lifestyle characterised by spiritually transfigured relationships between people, no longer defined by violence, addictions and selfish propensities."[36]

Having said that, Maximus almost invariably limits the significance of sexual difference to the temporal sphere, discerning in its features more a legacy of sensual corruption than a proto-sacramental ordination toward Trinitarian communion. In this respect, he falls short of the kind of sentiments in sexual anthropology and marital theology that we have found developed in contemporary Catholic theology, according to which male and female complementarity is regarded as the primordial paradigm of all the sacraments, and a married person's path to holiness is described not in terms of just a generic philanthropy, nor a formal moral scheme, but in terms of the risk of concrete action, and with specific reference to the name of one's spouse.[37]

Part II: Challenges

Maximus presents an intriguing figure for revisionist moral theologies. On the one hand, it is argued that his theology of sexuality is grounded in a metaphysics in which created difference and otherness have no real positive value and only detract from an ideal state of divine unity.[38] I believe we have to acknowledge the partial truth in this claim, although most postmodern philosophy needs to be "disabused of its prejudiced notion that ancient and medieval philosophy is simply onto-theology that seeks only to valorize 'presence' by suppressing ab-

[36] Costache, "Living Above Gender", 20.

[37] See Livio Melina, *The Epiphany of Love: Toward a Theological Understanding of Christian Action* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010); John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, tr. Michael Waldstein (Boston: St Pauls, 2006), 202-4 (catechesis 19:3-6); William E. May, "Love Between Man and Woman: The Epitome of Love", in *The Way of Love: Reflections on Pope Benedict XVI's Encyclical Deus Caritas Est*, eds. Livio Melina and Carl. A. Anderson (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2006), 66-79.

[38] Damien Casey, "Maximus and Irigaray: Metaphysics and Difference", at http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/staffhome/dacasey/Maximus&Irigaray.pdf (accessed September 3, 2012).

sence and alterity..."[39] On the other hand, Maximus is welcomed as a potential ally in the quest to validate queer and homosexual theological and moral agendas. His emphasis upon the generic character of human nature and the *imago Dei*, along with his notion that Christ overcomes the binary division of nature into male and female, are martialled in support of more fluid interpretations of sexual identity. The body of Christ is "multi-gendered," argues Gerard Loughlin, and so it is a polymorphous image that "all marriages, same-sex and other-sex, are called to share and show."[40] Yet another line of argument, also from queer theology circles, invokes the apophaticism of Maximus and other Fathers in order to subvert the moral or theological normativity of any created symbol or form and to reduce the God-given distinction between male and female to the status of a provisional human construct.[41] According to Susannah Cornwall, "Queer theologies emphasize the profoundly ineffable and indescribable nature of the manner in which human sex, gender and sexuality fit together, just as negative theologies have emphasized the unknowability of God."[42] "God Godself is not gendered in the way that humans are, so the part of us that is... becoming divine is not necessarily a part that needs to maintain gender as a central or critical aspect of selfhood."[43] The Fathers' teaching on ascetic self-transcendence apparently teaches us that to become truly human we need to let go of that which we commonly think most deeply defines us, including our bodily sexual specificity. Baptism washes away the meaning of all such external identities and replaces them with the one transcendent identity of Christ. In the light of the eschaton, sexual difference plays only an "instrumental" role in this world and is at best "penultimate."[44]

[39] This apt remark is from Mark Wenzinger's review of Andrzej Wiercinski, *Inspired Metaphysics? Gustav Siewerth's Hermeneutic Reading of the Onto-theological Tradition*, in *The Review of Metaphysics* 61/3 (2008), 673-4.

[40] Gerard Loughlin, "Nuptial Mysteries", in Simon Oliver et al. (eds.), *Faithful Reading: New Essays in Theology in Honour of Fergus Kerr, OP* (London: T and T Clark, 2012), 173-92, at 189.

[41] See Cameron Partridge, "Transgender People and the Church's Transformative Mission", at http://www.chicagoconsultation.org/article/62/making-the-case/transgender-people-and-the-church-s-transformative-mission (accessed August 31, 2012); Susannah Cornwall, "Apophasis and Ambiguity: The 'Unknowingness' of Transgender", in Marcella Althaus-Reid and Lisa Isherwood (eds.), Trans/formations (London: SCM, 2009), 13-40.

[42] Cornwall, "Apophasis and Ambiguity", 17.

[43] Ibid., 28.

[44] Ibid., 26-29.

All of these proposals rest upon the assumption that the body and sexuality belong to an order of signs that, being shot through with the contingency proper to creation and history, possess only a provisional, and in principle interchangeable, analogical value. But it is not necessary to deny the fact that their meaning is constituted by factors specific to tradition, community, and culture, to insist also that this contextuality need not deprive such signs of their transcendent, "referential status."[45] As Dionysius the Areopagite discerned, the revelatory efficacy of certain signs is in no way diminished simply because they appear altogether *unlike* their referents, though this does not mean that just any sign will do.[46] Thus theology has always proposed that there are certain signs that, belonging to an objective order of symbol ordained by God, possess a kind of paradigmatic status and are therefore not liable to resignification, whether by calculated revision or arbitrary manipulation. Wherever these signs appear, they speak their message, even if they remain suppressed or unheard. Borrowing a term from C. S. Lewis, we may fittingly call such signs "semitive figures" which present themselves to us as "live and awful shadows of realities utterly beyond our control and largely beyond our direct knowledge."[47] Somehow transcending the symbolic order, while remaining within it, their immediate connection to what they signify is not constructed from without, nor a symptom of religious imagination, historical construction, or subjective ingenuity, but is an intrinsic feature native to their very constitution. Such signs are recognized as being invested with significatory or symbolic value by the very fact of their givenness by God, not merely as a consequence of cultural forces. Their signification therefore works more at the level of a pregnant and poetic actualization of meaning, than simply at the level of a provisional, and in principle substitutable, indication of meaning.

What I am talking about are signs whose intelligible content is not constituted by the subjective intention of the mind that apprehends them, but is rather objectively intrinsic to the sign itself. What signs could possibly fulfil this description? The first obvious answer lies in

[45] See Janet Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 142-61.

[46] *The Celestial Hierarchy* II, 1-5.

[47] See C. S. Lewis, *Undeceptions: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1971), 191-6.

the Christian sacraments. What they *signify*, what they mean and do, at the level of spiritual and sacramental actualization, depends crucially on the preservation of their concrete, historically contingent mode and matter of enactment, which cannot simply be arbitrarily modified. A second example lies in certain revealed biblical metaphors and symbols, including the name of the holy Trinity. The formula "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" is not an arbitrary sign whose signified meaning and "content" can be equally communicated and rendered actual and intelligible by alternative terms. Precisely in the ordered relativity and contingent specificity of these names, their non-exchangeablity for more generic, univocal terms of address, lies their theological and revelatory significance, their meaning and function as sacramental, doxological, and invocatory agents of incorporation into the life of God.

A third example of a paradigmatic, semitive sign is the sexually differentiated human body. What the human body *is* at the level of its biological and sexually specific determinations is intrinsically related to what it *means*, what it *signifies*, at the level of its personal and intentional actualization. An alternative meaning cannot be imposed or read into the sign of the body without distortion or violation of the meaning that is already, intrinsically *there*.

Maximus in fact adumbrates this reverence for the paradigmatic symbolism of the body when, in reflecting on the Transfiguration in *Ambiguum* 10, he argues that for our sake it was necessary for the eternal Logos "to become the type and symbol of himself, and from himself symbolically to represent himself."[48] In the light of the hypostatic union, in which the Logos became—and mysteriously remains even in transfigured glory—not just a sexless generic human but a celibate male, we can no longer regard the human body, along with the specificity of sexual difference, as an arbitrary sign bearing no meaning beyond that imposed on it by human history and culture. The nuptial mystery theology developed by such theologians as Hans Urs von Balthasar, Pope John Paul II, and Paul Evdokimov builds on this deep conviction that the human body, precisely in its sexed duality, has been created specifically "to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden from eternity in God, and to be a sign of it."[49] From beginning to end the

[48] *Ambig.Io.* 10, PG 91.1165D.

[49] John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them,* 203 (catechesis 19:4).

drama of human sexuality finds its goal and reference point in the asymmetrical nuptial union of Christ and the Church. Many people think that John Paul II's catecheses on the theology of the body are only interested in the recovery of a pristine, ideal human state. But it is the story of the Incarnation in Palestine, even more than the story of Creation in Paradise, that forces "the body" upon us as a category for theological reflection. It is "through the fact that the Word became flesh" that the body has "entered theology through the main door."[50]

Another scholar who has developed nuptial mystery theology with particular acumen, sometimes in conscious response to the challenges of revisionist theologies, is Angelo Scola. Scola distinguishes between "spousal vocabulary," by which he means the spousal images drawn from the Scriptures, "nuptial language," by which he means the hermeneutical elaboration of these spousal categories, and "nuptial mystery," by which he means a critical and organic elaboration of this nuptial language for the sake of the *intellectus fidei*. Scola finds two elements standing out in the "nuptial language" enunciated by Pope John Paul II. First, there is the communal quality of the *imago Dei*: "Man and woman are the image of God not only as individuals, but also insofar as they are capable of interpersonal communion." In this way *communio* is proposed as an integral anthropological and theological category. And second, there is the notion of the so-called spousal meaning of the body: the sexually differentiated human body manifests an innate design of God that directs us toward our supernatural end in the Christ/Church spousal union.[51] To these two elements Scola would add a third, namely, the dramatic character of man. The human person is an enigma who only discovers the key to his meaning outside himself, in a relational drama with Christ. Sexual difference and the phenomenology of erotic experience play a unique role in bringing this enigma to the light of consciousness within the common conditions of developing human experience. Every child has his foundation of existence outside himself, in the procreative union of his father and mother. As this foundational drama unfolds a second drama opens out within which he has to make sense of himself, that of sexual difference. These two

[50] Ibid., 221 (catechesis 23:4)

[51] Angelo Cardinal Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, tr. Michelle Boras (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 387-8.

dramas of existence, the first filial and the second nuptial, are deeply interconnected.[52]

Scola goes on to outline the lineaments of a nuptial mystery theology from these elements of nuptial language. The "mystery" consists in the "ontological impossibility of realizing oneself within sexual difference without simultaneously bringing into play the experience of love as capacity for procreation."[53] There is a real analogical relation between filiality and procreative sexual union, and the vocation to realize the truth of our foundational origin in God the Trinity. This analogy requires a unity of the two, open to a third, who is the fruit of the union. Hereby three constituents unite: difference, love, and fruitfulness; or as Scola sometimes puts it: the one, the other, and the unity of the two. Scola is well aware of certain dead-ends or misapplications in the use of this analogy. The first lies in an overly-kataphatic application, whereby sexuality gets introduced into God himself. This amounts to a denial of the always greater dissimilitude involved in every analogy. The second lies in an overly-apophatic application, whereby the categories of nuptial mystery are denied any meaningful theological weight. Their significance is reduced to the parabolic and metaphorical, or regarded with a kind of agnostic silence. Some even go further, gnostically effacing the meaning of male/female sexual difference altogether, thereby collapsing the possibility of encountering within the conditions of human experience the more profound difference between God and creation.[54]

Now more than ever a clear witness to the nuptial mystery is needed for what Scola calls the Church's task of "regenerating" the human subject.[55] Inasmuch as it takes into account both the constitutive meaning of sexual difference and the existential value of love for the human person, nuptiality arguably provides for our troubled times a most apt analogue by which to reflect afresh not only on Trinitarian theology, but also on Christology, ecclesiology, eucharistic theology, and of course, anthropology. These mysteries in turn illuminate and deepen the human meaning and experience of bodily sexual difference. The category of nuptial mystery allows us to speak of that love from which even the most

[52] Ibid., 388-9.
[53] Ibid., 390.
[54] Ibid., 394-5.
[55] Ibid., 392.

debased and degenerate forms of love derive a certain intelligibility in the form of promise, nostalgia, or even hope.[56] It is not for nothing that in *Deus Caritas Est* Pope Benedict XVI proposed the love between a man and a woman as the image of love *par excellence* (*amoris per excellentiam imago perfecta*). The longing for love cannot be erased from the restless human heart, yet to say "love" with any kind of meaning is to imply all that is entailed by sexual difference and the fecundity towards which it is ordered.[57]

So what contribution can Maximus continue to make to such a project? My sense is that an adequate sexual anthropology must go beyond Maximus. But I also think it can do so in a way that is both faithful to his instinct and in fact draws upon the resources of his own theological repertoire. For Maximus, Jesus Christ the Incarnate Logos is the key to the interpretation of all things. He alone is the true beginning, the original image of God, the goal of Creation. And so it is from Christ above all, and not simply from Adam and Eve or from fallen human experience, that we are able to arrive at a fully authentic account of what it means to be human. And in Christ, says Maximus quoting Saint Paul, there is no male or female. But does that spell the end of any special or determinative meaning for bodily sexual difference? Not so, if we recall that the *physis anthropine* we meet in Christ is not an abstract concept, but a concrete entity, and therefore actualized and knowable and definable only in its interrelation with other personal subjects. In Christ, just as we do not meet divinity generically considered, but the only-begotten Son of the Father, so in him we do not just meet humanity generically considered, but the virginally-conceived, crucified, and resurrected Messiah of Israel. Just as we can only account for his divinity relative to the Father and the Spirit, so we can only account for his humanity relative to certain human persons, with the most determinative being the Patriarchs, Israel, Mary and Joseph, the Apostles, and the Church. In other words, the fully deified humanity revealed to us in Jesus Christ

[56] "That is love, exclusive love, jealous, passionate love, often egotistical way down under. But if we follow its development or unravel its secret aspirations, we will find the serious design of a fecund will under the fascinations of sterile voluptuousness." Maurice Blondel, *Action (1893): Essay on a Critique of Life and a Science of Practice,* tr. Oliva Blanchette (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame press, 2003), 242.

[57] In his letter to John the Cubicularius (*Ep.* 2, PG 91.401D) Maximus similarly denies any fundamental division between divine and human forms of love.

as our supernatural end is by no means an isolated genderless entity (which is what you would get from a Christology limited to the terms of a generic divinity and humanity), but a historically enriched, filial and nuptial communion of persons.

One final point I think corroborates this one. We know that Maximus' theology of deification draws heavily not only on a rich moral psychology in which affectivity and passion play a determinative role, but also on a mystical tradition that understands love as a kind of erotic *ecstasis*. As Dionysius the Areopagite expressed it, love (*eros*) draws the lover out of himself so that he enters and in some way becomes the object of his love.[58] Two primary characteristics of this dynamic are, first, the role of passivity: love is both experience and action. And second, the erotic structure maintains the difference between lover and beloved, even in their ecstatic identity, so that neither loses his unique personal identity.[59] In Maximus' writings these same dynamics are similarly expressed in terms borrowed from the experiential phenomenology of conjugal love: he criticizes knowledge of God that is not motivated and accompanied by passionate desire for God; he underscores our inability to actualize our own deification and our need to suffer and receive it as a divine action; and he argues that the true fulfilment of our nature lies in coming to stand outside of those things that are proper it.[60] Polycarp Sherwood has summarised these elements in Maximus' theology: "*Ecstasis*... is a result or a concomitant of deification and means that the deified subject is acted upon with effects beyond its natural powers; on the part of the subject there is an outgoing of the

[58] Cf. *Divine Names* IV.10-15. See further Eric Perl, "The Metaphysics of Love in Dionysius the Areopagite", *Journal of Neoplatonic Studies* 6 (1997), 45-73.

[59] See Pierre Rousselot, *The Problem of Love in the Middle Ages: A Historical Contribution*, tr. Alan Vincelette (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001). In Maximus' definition of love this duality between the united terms remains even in the union: "For it is the most perfect work of love and the goal of its activity, to contrive through the mutual exchange of what is related that the names and properties of those that have been united through love should be fitting for each other. So the human being is made God, and God is called and appears as human...." *Ep.* 2, PG 91.401B.

[60] See e.g. *Q.Thal.* 1; *Q.Thal.* 22; *Car.* 2.48; *Car.* 3.66-67; *Ep.* 2 etc. In no way does this deifying *ecstasis* from the things proper to one's nature imply liberty to act contrary to that nature. "For nature punishes those who are prepared to corrupt it in part to the same degree as those who live contrary to it, by the loss of ready, natural access to its full power...." *Ambig.Io.* 10.31, PG 91.1164C.

will to God, which is wholly impregnated with the divine will."[61] So it appears that even for Maximus, the ultimate state of simplicity, the unity of all the *logoi* of reality in the one and only Logos, the final passage beyond the sensible into the intelligible, the blessed and holy embrace of all creation by God, is appropriately praised and apprehended by analogical reference to "the great mystery" of the New Testament, the two-in-one flesh nuptial union of husband and wife, which he happily identifies as a sign of the joyful entry of the worthy into "the bridal chamber of Christ."[62]

[61] Polycarp Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of St Maximus the Confessor and His Refutation of Origenism* (Studia Anselmiana 36, Rome: Herder, 1955), 136.

[62] *Myst.* 5 and 15.

Pathos and *Technê* in St Maximus the Confessor

Joshua Lollar

...the essence of technology is by no means anything technological.
– Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*

Technology is such a pervasive and dominating reality of modern life—is it not *the* reality of modern life?—that it is difficult to find a way authentically and rigorously to think it, to call it into question from any point of view.[1] To be sure, it is quite an easy thing to find those who fervently denounce technology and also those who, with equal fervor, defend technology and even keep festival for it, and these all of varying degrees of sophistication, from the romantic, to the prophetic, to the banal. There is a piety (and impiety) of the text, the cell, the electronic mail; there is a propriety (and impropriety) of the virtual, the image, and their control; there is the progress (and regress) of modern weaponry: the machine-gun, the atomic bomb, the drone. Arguments are made for the promise or danger of any given technological innovation, or of the very notion of technological innovation as such. Much work has indeed gone into getting the question of modern technology actually before us. The actual development of technology and its use, however, proceed in a way that remains only incidentally—if at all—touched by thought that is itself anything other than technical.

[1] I am very grateful for the numerous helpful comments from colleagues on the initial version of this paper delivered at the *International Symposium on Saint Maximus the Confessor*, University of Belgrade.

The purpose of this essay is to give voice to the Greek patristic tradition, specifically to St Maximus the Confessor, with respect to the question of technology. Maximus gives no thoroughly worked-out study of technology—the ancient Greek term is *technê*, which I shall discuss below—but what he does say about *technê* can lead us on the path to facing up to what is at stake in this matter of technology. The work of this essay will be to trace the contours of this path in a preliminary way, to indicate a possible direction for our thinking about technology as it is enabled by Maximus' thought.

As the epigraph at the head of this essay indicates, my reading of Maximus will work itself out in a way that speaks to Heidegger, principally the analysis of *Da-sein* (the way of being that characterizes human beings) as "attunement" (*Befindlichkeit*) in *Sein und Zeit*, and the interpretation of technology as "revealing"—Heidegger coins the term *Entbergen* ("disinterring," "unearthing"), which is his way of understanding the Greek ἀλήθεια (truth)[2]—in *Die Frage nach der Technik*.[3] But my text is Maximus, not Heidegger; I shall leave to the side in particular Heidegger's *mythos* of the history of the presence and withdrawal of Being and technology's role in that history. However, Heidegger has raised the question of technology in a compelling way, and his relationship to ancient Greek thought induces a certain openness between him and the Greek Fathers. In that it helps us, I claim, to see something in Maximus, Heidegger's thought shapes the arc of the horizon of my reading here.

Contemporary philosophers often point out that the question of technology as the subject of a specific realm of philosophical inquiry is a novel one within the movements of Western thought,[4] developing in earnest only in the years following the First World War, and this is, perhaps, to be expected given the dramatic changes in technology's role in human life in the modern world: the massive industrialization of production and distribution, the perils of atomic energy, the ubiquity of

[2] See Richard Rojcewicz's commentary on the term in *The Gods and Technology: A Reading of Heidegger* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), 47-55, where he translates *Entbergen* finally as "disclosive looking."

[3] *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2000), 7-36; English trans. in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings* (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1977), 287-317.

[4] Among others, see Paul T. Durbin, "Philosophy of Technology: Retrospective and Prospective Views," *Technology and the Good Life?* ed. Eric Higgs, Andrew Light, and David Strong (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 38.

computing, and so on. Indeed, the changes in technology appear to be so radical that we may ask the question of whether or not what we mean by "technology" answers at all to Greek notions of *technê*, its ancient antecedent. The term τεχνολογία amongst ancient authors refers to discourse and could mean "technical"[5]—or even, in certain contexts, "overly technical"[6]—"language." Aristotle, who had much to say about *technê*, used versions of the term τεχνολογία in his *Rhetoric* as referring, in general, to concerns of grammar and literary genre.[7] We should be aware of this philological point from the beginning as a way of acknowledging that the twentieth century dynamics surrounding the question—and the very language—of technology have characteristics peculiar to our era, qualified as it is by our particular way of energy and information.

I am, however, doubtful of any view that would assume an absolute separation between the ancient and modern aspirations of *technê* and am inclined to accept Stanley Cavell's assertion that "modernism only makes explicit and bare what has always been true of art"[8] ("art" being another name for *technê*). Moreover, while the possibilities and problems of the modern technological age may well have been inconceivable to the ancients, the question of the status of *technê* in human life and society was framed by the ancients and developed by Medieval thought in modes that have prepared the way for how we must raise the question today. The intellectual tradition from Plato to the high Middle Ages has regarded *technê* with a certain ambivalence and has variously assigned it to the realm of the irrational at one extreme; to the lowest level of human knowledge, compromised by its connection to the baseness of material reality, in a sort of intermediary position; and even, in Hugh of St. Victor, to the restoration of human nature to its prelapsarian state at the other extreme.[9] Plato illustrates the ambivalence well. In the *Georgias* he

[5] Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* 2.205, *Against the Dogmatists* 2.87, where he uses the term to refer to the specific doctrinal systems of philosophical schools.

[6] Greg. Naz., *Or.* 29.21, *Or.* 31.18, where it is the *technologia* of the Eunomians, their pedantically (and falsely) logical articulations of theology, that Gregory attacks.

[7] See Carl Mitcham on this theme, "Philosophy and the History of Technology," *The History and Philosophy of Technology* ed. George Bugliarello and Dean B. Doner (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979), esp. 171–188.

[8] "Music Discomposed," *Art, Mind, and Religion* ed. W.H. Capitan and D.D. Merrill (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1967), 76.

[9] See Elspeth Whitney, "Paradise Restored. The Mechanical Arts from Antiquity through the Thirteenth Century." *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 80:1 (1990), 1–169.

has Socrates say, "I do not call anything that is irrational (ἄλογον) an 'art' (τέχνην)."[10] On this account, *technê* is always bound up with *logos*, is always open to a rational account of its production. Aristotle says something similar at the beginning of the *Metaphysics*, where it is *technê*, and not mere habitual experience (ἐμπειρία), that is defined as knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), because it is *technê* that gives knowledge of causes (αἰτίαι).[11] However, in the *Republic*, "arts and crafts" (τέχναι καὶ δημιουργίαι) and the base activities (αἱ βαναυσίαι) that go along with them disfigure soul and body and run contrary to the practice of philosophy.[12]

Maximus takes his place within the ambiguity of the fundamental concept of *technê*. He inherits, in particular from the Cappadocians, the view that the *technai* are gifts from God, "remedying the deficiencies of nature,"[13] even drawing, in their relation to human weakness and *pathos*, the human being into a proper relationship with the created world,[14] but also that they can be misused and so show themselves to be anything but unambiguous blessings. But what, fundamentally, is the essence of *technê* according to Maximus? I claim that the answer, or, at least, the path to an answer, is to be found in Maximus' understanding of *pathos*. Thus, we should raise the question of the relationship between *pathos* and *technê* in the thought of St Maximus, that is, the relationship between human subjection to external conditions and the technic, even technological, response to that subjection, which, Maximus says, arose with man's fall into corruption and sin.[15] In bringing the concepts of *pathos* and *technê* together, we shall see what it means for Maximus, and for those of us who would follow him, to approach the meaning of *technê*.

I. *Pathos*

The concept of *pathos*—passion, passibility, being subject to something other than oneself—lies at the heart of St Maximus the Confessor's understanding of man, and of created nature in general. He famously says in *Ambiguum* 7, "*pathos*...exists together with beings by nature (φύσει συνυπάρχον τοῖς οὖσι),"[16] and it is this insight that guides his thinking in that crucial text. Creation is not stable in its foundations. The unthinkable creation out of nothing implies, for Maximus, that motion and passivity are the fundamental realities of created being. For human beings this passivity locates itself in body and soul. With respect to the body, Maximus says,

> The change and alteration of the body and what is outside the body are common to all human beings. They are both actively and passively involved in motion, and the only steadiness and stability they possess are constant unsteadiness and motion.[17]

But this bodily manifestation and experience are simply the epiphany of human being itself to itself in its primordial *pathos*, the visibility of an invisible motion of being. The body, which comes before me as something that accompanies me but is other than me—in the words of St. Gregory the Theologian, whom Maximus interprets throughout the *Ambigua*, the body is my "yoke mate, fellow slave, fellow heir, fellow worker"[18]—this body discloses to me in its *pathos* the mystery of my own creation.

The motion of the soul is also a *pathos*. The soul as intellect (νοῦς) is "brought near to God without knowing him (ἀγνώστως περὶ θεὸν κινουμένη)."[19] This "being brought"—literally, "being moved"—of the intellect is a basic *pathos* of the soul. The soul as sensation (αἴσθησις) "receives the impression (ἀναμάσσεται) of the *logoi* of visible things, as from symbols, into itself."[20] The soul, like the body, is a dynamic, changeable reality in the world, the place of human *pathos* and therefore revelation. Intellect is brought near to God without knowledge; sensation receives impressions like a wax tablet. Reason (λόγος) appears to have a more active role in the acquisition of the knowledge of the *logoi*; the soul as λόγος moves itself in an active acquisition of knowledge of the *logoi* that confer upon it the form (λόγους μορφωτικούς) of God as Cause of all,[21]

[10] *Georgias* 465a.
[11] *Metaphysics* 1.981b.
[12] *Republic* VI.495d-e. Aristotle expresses similar concerns in *Politics* 8.1337b.
[13] St. Basil of Caesarea, *Long Rules* 55, trans. M. Monica Wagner, *Saint Basil: Ascetical Works* (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1950).
[14] St. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man* 7.
[15] See Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator* 2nd ed. (Chicago: Open Court, 1995), 144–168, for a general discussion of Adam's original state and sin in the works of Maximus.
[16] *Amb.* 7, PG 91.1073B13-14.
[17] *Amb.* 8, 1105B9-12.
[18] G. Naz., *Or.* 14.6.
[19] *Amb.* 10, 1112D8.
[20] *Amb.* 10, 1113?7-8.
[21] *Amb.* 10, 1113A2-6.

but its action is a movement that mediates the *pathos* of sensation ultimately to the *pathos* of the intellect's movement to God.

For Maximus, it is *pathos* that reveals. Heidegger is rather dismissive of the analysis of *pathos* (specifically, *ta pathê*) in patristic theology as, he claims, only "accompanying phenomena" that are classed along with "representational thinking and willing," as states of soul that correspond more or less adequately to the world.[22] However, as we see in Maximus, at least, the patristic notion of *pathos* is much closer to Heidegger's own interpretation of "attunement" as the disclosure of *Dasein*, which he connects to the Greek notion of *ta pathê*, and more generally to the notion of truth as disclosure (*Erschlossenheit*) that characterizes this interpretation,[23] for it is those who make their way through *pathos* that "make manifest the truth (φανερῶσαι τὴν ἀλήθειαν)."[24]

The Passion of Christ, the revelation of the Word of God to the world, is recapitulated in the being of man itself as body, intellect, reason, and sensation.[25] Indeed, God draws the world into participation with Himself through motion and in pouring Himself out into and as the world,[26] pours Himself into the dynamic of cosmic *pathos*, realized as love, which reveals Him. Within this vision, Maximus focuses particularly on God as the object of human *pathos* and desire, understanding, and ultimately praise, arguing in *Ambiguum* 23 that when Gregory the Theologian refers to the Monad/Unity as "being moved" to duality and then Trinity, Gregory is referring to the movement of the intellect that is "taught to confess beginning from the Father, continuing to the Son, to confess Him together with the Father, and then to receive the Holy Spirit together with the Father and the Son, to worship the perfect Trinity together with the perfect Monad/Unity."[27] Just as the fullness of the Trinity is progressively revealed through the course of Scripture, as Gregory says,[28] so too does Maximus affirm that Its fullness is revealed progressively to the individual mind, like an art

[22] *Sein und Zeit* §29, 138-139; trans. Joan Stambaugh, *Being and Time* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996), 130-131.

[23] See *Sein und Zeit* §41.

[24] *Amb.* 8, 1104D8-1105A3.

[25] Cf. *Amb.* 32, 1281B ff. for discussion of this theme.

[26] *Amb.* 35, 289A14-B2.

[27] *Amb.* 23, 1261A4-9; Maximus makes a similar transposition of divine motion to the created mind that comes to an awareness of the Trinity in *Amb.*1 (*to Thomas*).

[28] Cf. G. Naz., *Or.* 31.26.

(τέχνη) that is slowly mastered by a craftsman (we shall take up this image below), and like light that illumines the mind but is also the very goal of the mind's vision. Love is the content of the revelation of God to the world, and this revelation is recapitulated in the *pathos* of body and soul in each person.

We should be aware here that Maximus uses the term *pathos* in two different senses. On the fundamental level, a created being, something that has been moved from nonexistence into being, just is, as we've seen, *pathos* itself. Its very emergence into being is absolutely conditioned by *pathos* in that a creature's ability even to undergo passivity is itself given from outside itself. Within the realm of ethics, or *praxis*, however, *pathos* typically refers to the domination of reason (λόγος) by the body and the irrational aspects of the soul so that *apatheia*, passionlessness, refers to reason's ascendancy over the irrational. As the elder says at the beginning of Maximus' *Liber asceticus*, the human being in the state of corruption and death is "led along by the manifold passions of the flesh"[29] so that the life of ascetical practice is precisely a therapy of the passions. *Apatheia* in the life of asceticism is relative; reason is not subject to, is not moved by, the irrational. However, if *pathos* in the general sense, in which human beings are subject to forces outside of themselves—the weakness of the body and also its recalcitrance with respect to the mind being the most immediate manifestations of this—is, as we have seen, a revelation of the *pathos* at the heart of man's created nature and therefore the doorway to knowledge of God, then does *apatheia* on the level of experience imply an interruption of that revelation? What must Maximus mean by *apatheia*? We shall return to this question at the conclusion of this paper.

At the moment, we can say with certainty that the awareness of *pathos* is indeed the beginning of philosophy for Maximus, and *pathos* is experienced as ἀταξία, disorder. Maximus gives a significant account of the cause of our current state of disorder and of its rationale in *Ambiguum* 8:

> When man came into being and had been arrayed by God with the beauty of incorruption and immortality but preferred the coarseness of the material nature that surrounded him to intellectual

[29] *Maximi Confessoris Liber Asceticus*, CCSG 40, ed. Peter Van Deun (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 5.11-12.

> beauty, he completely forgot the pre-eminent worthiness of the soul, or rather, of God, who adorned the soul with the beauty of the divine form.[30]

Man preferred material nature, but precisely material nature as that which "surrounded him (περὶ αὐτόν)." In preferring what is περὶ αὐτόν, man is rapt in attention to what surrounds him, and this gives rise to forgetfulness (λήθη); attention leads precisely to distraction. This basic interval περὶ αὐτόν-λήθη introduces the

> corruption and death of the body, and a movement and disposition prone to every passion, and also the instability (τὸ ἄστατον) and irregularity (ἀνώμαλον) of the material reality that was both outside (ἔκτος) him and surrounded him (περὶ αὐτόν), and he became susceptible to changeability and even indifferent to it.[31]

This is the fruit of man's attention to the περὶ αὐτόν. He is in the world as subject to the world, attacked by the world, and ultimately consumed by the world.

Maximus rejects the quasi-Origenist notion that the providential creation of the material world is simply for the sake of training the soul, a view implying that the material world has no integrity of its own;[32] nevertheless, he does regard the human experience of *pathos* as pedagogy. The experience of pain and suffering under this mode of thinking teaches the soul and makes it aware of itself so that it should come to see its superiority to the body: "the all-wise Provider of our life often concedes to use what arises in our own impulses for the sake of our moderation (πρὸς σωφρονισμὸν ἡμῶν)."[33] Moderation is not at all the human experience of impulse in its untrained state. Rather, we frantically make use of impulses through the confusions and disturbances that surround them and come from them. ὁρμή, impulse in general, and ὁρμεῖς, the particular instances of this drive, are conceived here as realities that pull apart, scatter, and fragment. Confusion and disturbance—σύγχυσις and ταραχή—both surround (περὶ αὐτά) and derive from (ἐξ αὐτῶν) the realities that are the concern of ὁρμή (τὰ πράγματα ἐν ταῖς

[30] *Amb.* 8, 1104A2-8.
[31] *Amb.* 8, 1104A10-13.
[32] *Amb.* 10, 1133D2-1136B1; *Amb.* 42, 1328A2-9.
[33] *Amb.* 8, 1104B13-15.

οἰκείαις ὁρμαῖς), so that by themselves, they condition our drives and sensations to confusion and disorder, like the account in the *Timaeus* in which newly established souls that have not become accustomed to the harmonious and ordered revolutions of the cosmos are disturbed by the disordered sensations that come upon them.[34] Rather than being kept away, however, these confusing and disturbing phenomena are given precisely to provoke the love of what is "loveable by nature" in place of "what we happen to love right now" (τὰ παρόντα ἔρωτα). This dynamic derives from the conviction that human being, in its *pathos*, naturally tends towards stability and that when ὁρμή finds itself in pursuit of what is unstable, confused, unsatisfying, it will naturally seek to go beyond it towards what abides. All of this is part of the *paideia* of the passions, a training that results in healing (ἐξιᾶσθαι).

> "Therefore," Maximus says,
> perhaps the present unevenness of lifestyle has been allowed so that the power of reason in us, which prefers virtue to all else, might be shown. For the change and alteration of the body and what is outside the body are common to all human beings. They are both actively and passively involved in motion, and the only steadiness and stability they possess are constant unsteadiness and motion.[35]

It is *pathos* that reveals *logos* in a manifestation that comes forth by means of the instability of material life and the inequities it entails. The motion and *pathos* of the cosmos and of man within the cosmos bring about the manifestation of the power of *logos* in its disposition towards virtue: *pathos* is the revelation of the word, even as the Passion is the revelation of the Word. For Origen, the development and revelation of human intelligence (σύνεσις), which is provoked by the kind of lack and weakness in the midst of the world that we have defined here as *pathos*, is realized, significantly for our purposes, precisely as *technê*,[36] the concept to which we now turn.

II. *Technê*

The origin of *technê* for Maximus is man's attempt to shelter himself from his *pathos* in the world and to provide for his circumstantial

[34] *Tim.* 44a-b.
[35] *Amb.* 8, 1105B6-12.
[36] *Contra Celsum* IV.76.

needs, and this too reveals a certain mode of *logos*, that of the technical kind. He reflects, in *Ambiguum* 45, on Gregory the Theologian's teaching that man, *anthrôpos*, was "from the beginning...naked in his simplicity and life without artifice (ζωῇ ἀτέχνῳ)."[37] Adam's life was *atechnos*, without artifice. Maximus interprets this in a few different ways.[38] Most basically, he sees a radical difference between the human body before the transgression of Adam and after:

> Before the trespass... the human being was not torn apart in the constitution of his body by qualities that are contrary to and destructive of each other, but maintained his integrity without their ebb and flow and was free of the continuous alteration that comes with this ebb and flow, depending on the predominance of one quality or another.[39]

After the trespass, man found himself subject to the "ebb and flow" of elements and qualities. To explain the concept of ζωῇ ἀτέχνος, life without artifice, life without the application of *technê* to the world or to oneself, Maximus writes,

> According to this great teacher, the first human being lived without artifice, for he was not causing the natural bodily vigor that had once been essentially given to him to dissipate. He existed without the need for clothing and had no notion of shame because of his inherent dispassion, neither was he subject to cold and heat, which eventually led men to contrive a way of sheltering themselves with houses and clothing.[40]

Man in the state of *apatheia*, where he is not subject to *pathos*, has no need for *technê*. The mode of embodied life that "holds sway in ourselves now," however, is marked by dissipation, flux. Adam entered that mode when he ate of the forbidden fruit, thinking that his life depended upon the processes of decay and reconstitution for its persistence.[41] It is this process of dissipation that made a life conditioned by *technê* to

[37] G. Naz., *Or.* 45.8.

[38] Marguerite Harl gives a brief analysis of the themes of Adam's nudity and a-technic existence in Origen, the Cappadocians, Nemesius of Emessa, and John of Damascus in "La prise de conscience de la 'nudité' d'Adam. Une interpretation de Genèse 3.7 chez les Pères Grecs," *Studia Patristica* 7:1 (1966), 486-495.

[39] *Amb.* 45, 1353A1-10.

[40] *Amb.* 45, 1353B3-10.

[41] *Amb.* 10, 1156D4-9.

arise, for man now needed to cover his vulnerable body with clothing and shelter. Moreover, Adam's transgression introduced "the laws of irrationality...into nature" and thus gave rise to the division between nature and art, to the very possibility—and necessity—of a *technê* set over-against a nature become irrational.[42] The very duality of *technê* versus nature is conceived, by Maximus, as a result of sin. Man is now "concerned with the *logoi* of the technical arts (*technai*) in order to provide for the needs of life in the midst of his circumstances."[43] Thus, *technê* is bound up with human necessity, vulnerability, dissipation, ultimately with *pathos*: *technê* is man's attempt to keep himself secure in the midst of his *pathos*.

This is a poignant observation for us, for the development of technology since the industrial revolution has allowed—and has been driven by—the aspiration to secure ourselves in a definitive, structural, and final way from our own passivity, to the point where, as Hervé Juvin has put it, it is conceivable, from the perspective of technological possibilities, that a human being could go through life without ever experiencing any bodily *pathos*, lack, or discomfort: "The great novelty of the early twenty-first century in Europe is that we have just invented a new body, one resistant to need, suffering and the effects of time. Resistant to the world too, the world of nature, of destiny."[44] This is the aspiration of technological man, to transcend the world by means of *technê*.

For Maximus, *technê* arose to protect the body from its subjection to the harshness of the climate and to secure bodily needs. It also arose to provide for the technical fabrication of a certain form of the self through the techniques of asceticism and virtue: "Perhaps [Adam] was possessed of 'life without artifice' because he was beyond the variegated method of asceticism and virtue and instead possessed the undefiled *logoi* of the virtues as a habit"[45] In both cases, we find the application of method and the production of structure. Maximus refers this dynamic to knowledge as well, knowledge of the world in natural contemplation (θεωρία φυσική) and the knowledge of "Divine realities," the "things

[42] *Amb.* 31, 1276C8-10.

[43] *Amb.* 45, 1353C5.

[44] Hervé Juvin, *The Coming of the Body* trans. John Howe (London/New York: Verso, 2010), ix..

[45] *Amb.* 45, 1356A8-10.

after God (τὰ μετὰ θεόν)." Man's original "nakedness" in this context consisted in his freedom from "the contemplation and knowledge of nature that is characterized by multiplicity."[46] As man is now, he habitually approaches a world of multiplicity in a way characterized by multiplicity. However, Maximus envisions a primordial state in which

> [man] did not need first to think in terms of the phenomena that appear to the senses in order to come to an understanding of Divine things (τῆς ἐπ' αἰσθήσεσι τῶν φαινομένων διανοίας πρὸς κατανόησιν τῶν θείων), for he had as his simple covering only the uniform, simple, and constitutive virtue and knowledge that pertain to the things after God, which needed only to be brought to actualization in order to be made manifest as independent realities.[47]

While he speaks specifically here of "Divine things," he also intends to point to a vision without the dominance of the techniques of the contemplation of nature: "because [the first created man] was wise, he was established in a state beyond the contemplation of nature because of his knowledge," and as such, had nothing mediating God—mediation being the ultimate motion of the contemplation of nature—to him.[48] As things stand now, however, with the transgression of Adam, human knowledge is a species of technology. The transgression of Adam and his falling subject to the world and his own *pathos* resulted in a sort of "scientific revolution," to use Thomas Kuhn's phrase, in which man's thinking turned to a multiplicity of phenomena for the gathering of sense data, which, in a *technê* of cognition, leads to knowledge of the world and ultimately to Divine things. Human cognition exhibits in itself the *pathos* of change and it is this fact that determines the structure of the history of science precisely as revolution.

III. *Pathos and Technê*?

While this, for Maximus, is our habitual experience of knowing, in which knowledge of the world is mediated through the *technê* of sensation and imagination, he does envision the possibility of an immediate, a sort of "Edenic," way of knowing, in which it is not the *technê* of thought, but man himself, who stands in the position of media-

[46] *Amb.* 45, 1356A6-7.
[47] *Amb.* 45, 1356A12-B2.
[48] *Amb.* 45, 1353D2-6.

tion and allows for the return of the diversity of rationality (λόγος) to the mind's unity (νοῦς), where it is not the essences of things that appear by themselves but God Himself, whom Maximus refers to as "the divine fire that exists...in the substance of things (τῇ οὐσίᾳ τῶν ὄντων ἐνυπάρχοντος θείου πυρός)"[49]:

> [Fo]rms and shapes are naturally led from sense perception to the manifold *logoi* through the mediation of the power of reason. Similarly, the diverse differentiation of the manifold *logoi* that are in beings is naturally gathered together from the power of reason to a uniform, simple, and undifferentiated intelligibility (νόησις), an intelligibility according to which knowledge that is said to be unmediated, unquantified, and singular is constituted. Such a one, through visible things and the good order in them, truly represents to himself—as much as is possible for a human being—their Creator, Sustainer, and Founder, and thereby knows God, not according to what the essence and hypostasis actually are (for to know this is impossible and unattainable), but only learns the fact of His self-sufficient existence. These things come about after a person completely traverses the senses in their scheme of position, shape, form, and appearance and (to sum up this description before it becomes excessively detailed) after he comes to be entirely outside of the very difference in the *logoi* of beings itself, and has inserted himself, as it were, as the meeting place (μεθόριον) between God and everything that comes after God.[50]

As we see in great detail throughout *Amb.* 10, this "traversal" (διάβασις) of sensation is the pathway taken by the saints, and it implies, precisely as a traversal, that the way back to the immediate knowledge that characterizes Adam as *atechnos* leads *through* and beyond the *technê* of thinking as we know it now in a sort of "incarnate economy" of thought. The same can be said for the *technê* of ethical life, which is foundational for Maximus' understanding of the spiritual life, but is also transcended, having been endured.[51] As we've seen, even the un-

[49] *Amb.* 10, 1148D1-2.
[50] *Amb.* 15, 1216B1-C6.
[51] Cf. the treatise *On the Lord's Prayer, Maximi Confessoris Opuscula Exegetica Duo*, CCSG 23, ed. Peter Van Deun (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991), 48.360-361, where the one who has achieved freedom from sense perception no longer has to be "burdened with the questions of ethics (οὐκ εὔλογον ἐπιβαρεῖσθαι...τῷ κατ' ἦθος τρόπῳ)."

folding of theological knowledge proceeds like the working-out of *technê*. Referring to Gregory the Theologian's phrase from *Or.* 29.2, "the Monad is moved from the beginning to dyad, until it comes to stability as Triad," and having affirmed that whatever has no cause of its existence is unmoved, Maximus writes,

> "How, then," someone might ask, "does this miraculous teacher introduce a moving divinity in the passage just quoted?" We will reply to such an inquirer with what he knows quite well: The constitutive *logos* of each art (ἑκάστης τέχνης συνεκτικὸς λόγος), if I may employ a figure for comparison (παραδείγματι χρήσομαι), remains entirely immovable in itself. It is shaped according to the form of each thing that is produced by it, and is said "to be set in motion" when it produces motion itself: it is the artifact that is moved in accordance with the art rather than the *logos* of the art itself being moved when the art is realized.[52]

There are deep and significant pathways of thought to be found in the figures chosen for explication. We can see with this notion of theology as a *technê*, that the notion of *technê* is present at every stage of Maximus' vision of the spiritual life—ethics, contemplation of nature, and theology—and every stage has within itself a structure of self-transcendence. This three-fold spiritual life, as *technê*, reveals that the essence of *technê* for Maximus is ascent, progress, and transcendence. But what of *technê* in what we would think of as its more technological sense? Is there a similar pathway of traversal and transcendence? It would seem that the very logic we see at play in modern technology—perpetual refinement and development—has an analogue in Maximus' thought: *technê* as always *diabasis*, traversal, transcendence. But precisely what is the analogy?

It is not a question for Maximus of *whether* man shall be *technos*, but of how. Given man's desire to secure himself from his own *pathos* and subjection to the world, given his desire to transcend the world, and given modern man's technological prowess and partial realization of this desire through technological means, is Maximus' basic vision of philosophical and spiritual life, which is grounded in human *pathos* and more precisely, in man's awareness of his *pathos*, comprehensible to us

[52] *Amb.* 23, 1260A10-B3.

today, as an aspiration? Moreover, given the revelatory nature of *pathos*, should we not understand in Maximus' assertion of *apatheia* as an ethical *telos* that Maximus, in a *via negativa* of praxis, intends to throw the passions themselves in relief against the bare screen of the possibility of dispassion so that they may all the more come forth as the revelation of human being?

There is an enormous amount of *pathos*, realized as anxiety, struggle, and suffering, that exists today, but Juvin is right to identify the aspiration towards technological passionlessness as constitutive of our aspirations in Europe and North America, and indeed, in most industrialized nations around the world. It is an aspiration that has, as we've seen, received a specifically theological articulation in Hugh of St. Victor. What does this mean for Maximus' notion of *apatheia*, taken, as I've suggested, as the horizon for the disclosure of *pathos*? Does the aspiration towards a technologically induced *apatheia* and transcendence entail the replacement of Maximus' ascetical *apatheia*, which is fundamentally the revelation of *pathos*, and therefore the loss of the revelation through experiential *pathos* of the fundamental *pathos* of man's being? It is the experience of *pathos* that elicited Gregory the Theologian's questioning of himself, "What is the wisdom concerning me and what is this great mystery?" Does modern *technê*, in its aspiration to fabricate an artificial Eden in which man is not, or no longer, subject to nature, finally eradicate this revelatory question? Does the prevention of *pathos*, through which we acquire the likeness of Christ's death (τῷ ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου [Χριστοῦ] διὰ τῶν αὐτῶν παθημάτων), also prevent our "sharing in the nature of his resurrection"?[53]

Technological innovation is always running ahead of reflection upon technology, and as we've noted, disciplined reflection upon technology as a field of critical inquiry is quite a recent development. This is, perhaps, inevitable, but it should also motivate us to think more deeply about the essence of technology. The Scriptures, along with the Greek philosophical tradition, are ambivalent about human *technê*: it is the sons of Cain who originate metal tools, musical instruments, cities (Gen 4.17–22); and those devoted to the "work of their *technê*" "will not be found where parables are spoken" (Sirach 38.34). The relation of

[53] *Amb.* 31, 1281B2-4.

man to *technê*, which most everyone today would recognize as having serious ecological and social implications, also has, on this analysis, deep spiritual and theological implications as well. It has been the purpose of this paper to discern the contours of these implications as we find them in St Maximus the Confessor. In raising the question of the relationship between Maximus' understanding of *pathos* as revelation and his teaching on the origin of *technê*, I hope to have indicated a possibility for thought that St Maximus has provided to us.

Following Origen's intuition, which we noted above, that human intelligence is developed and revealed in the face of *pathos* precisely *as technê*, an intuition that Maximus follows insofar as he regards the philosophic life of ethics, contemplation of nature, and theology as *technê*, we see that *pathos* and *technê* are bound up for Maximus with revelation—of God and the world to man and of man to himself. The possibilities of and our responsibilities for *technê*, therefore, are open to the manifestation of "the truth that yet remains hidden (φανερῶσαι τὴν τέως κεκρυμμένην ἀλήθειαν),"[54] which is what is shown in the saints, or to its obscurity. A *technê* that decisively obscures *pathos* in its attempt to transcend the world participates in the obscuring of truth itself. The "revealing" (*Entbergen*) that is *technê* runs the risk of burying the more fundamental revealing that is *pathos*, unless it is *pathos* itself that is revealed by *technê*. It is this final possibility that we may take as Maximus' word on "the question concerning technology."

[54] *Amb.* 8, 1104D8-1105A3.

Learning How to Love: Saint Maximus on Virtue

Aristotle Papanikolaou

After centuries of domination by deontological and utilitarian ethics, what is being called virtue ethics in Europe and North America has experienced a revival over the last two decades. This revival is often traced to Elizabeth Anscombe's 1958 article, "Modern Moral Philosophy," in which she launches a scathing critique on both deontological and utilitarian ethics.[1] Anscombe's efforts to revive a virtue form of ethics within both philosophical and theological ethics would not bear fruit until the publication of Alisdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* in 1981. Since then, there has been increasing attention to what has been called virtue ethics as an alternative to deontological and utilitarian ethics.

In the limited amount of literature I have read on virtue ethics, it seems to me that although virtue ethics has emphasized the contextuality of both moral decision-making and moral action, it tends to slide toward deontology in that the emphasis is still on discerning the rule in a given context. Where virtue ethicists are hesitant is in offering a thick understanding of what it means to be human, which could then ground their understanding of the relation between virtues and the good inherent to being human.

In *After Virtue*, Alisdair MacIntyre famously argued that what divided modern from pre-modern ethics is that pre-modern ethics was based on a three-fold structure "of untutored human-nature-as-it-happens-to-be, human-nature-as-it could-be-if-it-realized-its-*telos*, and the precepts of rational ethics as the means for the transition from one to

[1] G. E. M. Anscombe, Modern Moral Philosophy," *Philosophy*, 33:124 (January 1958).

the other."[2] Modern ethics, he argues, eliminated the second element of this structure, which is "human-nature-as-it-could-be-if-it-realized-its-*telos*," and, as a result, is both incoherent and destined to fail insofar as it attempts to retain the precepts of pre-modern ethics while eliminating the teleological framework within which those precepts developed. While there has been discussion within virtue ethics about the goods inherent to being human, philosophical virtue ethicists, including MacIntyre himself, have been less successful, and almost hesitant, about providing a thick and well-grounded notion of "human-nature-as-it-could-be-if-it-realized-its-*telos*."

Providing a conception of "human-nature-as-it-could-be-if-it-realized-its-*telos*" is not a problem for Christian theological virtue ethics. Virtue ethics within Christian thought has almost entirely focused on the thought of Thomas Aquinas. An important discussion over the past two decades has been the relation between the cardinal and the theological virtues in Aquinas. The cardinal virtues are those acquired in which the human realizes her natural end; the theological virtues are those infused by God as gift, in which the human realizes his supernatural end, which is knowledge of God in charity. In virtue ethics in Aquinas, there is no question that virtue is linked to a thick understanding of the human *telos*; what is complicated to understand in Aquinas is the relation between two distinct-though-not-separated *teloi* for the human.[3]

Before I discuss the thought of St Maximus, let me admit that I have been convinced by recent literature that has affirmed that both Aquinas and his predecessor by many centuries, Augustine, believed that the human was created for theosis. Put anther way, I reject the idea that what separates Aquinas from the Greek Fathers is that Aquinas rejected the idea of deification. Rather than seeing a diametrical opposition between the East and the West, I would rather frame the difference as one of conceptualities *within* the common framework or belief that the human was created for union with God. With that said, I do think there is a point of difference between Thomistic virtue ethics as

[2] Alisdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: Univer. of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 53.

[3] For Aquinas on virtue, see Joseph Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), and Jean Porter, *The Recovery of Virtue: The Relevance of Aquinas for Christian Ethics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990)

transmitted through the Catholic tradition and the virtue ethics of the ascetical tradition as developed in the thought of St Maximus the Confessor. It should be noticed that the revival of virtue ethics within philosophical and theological ethics has almost entirely focused on the thought of Aristotle and Aquinas. It is often argued that the best insights of the ascetical tradition were folded into Aquinas' synthesis. This assessment is inaccurate, and the time is now ripe to interrupt the current discussions of philosophical and theological virtue ethics with the tradition of thinking on virtue in the ascetical tradition, most especially the thought of St Maximus the Confessor.

St Maximus and Aquinas agree that the *telos* of the human is to be more loving, to learn how to love, which is embodied deification. Thomistic virtue ethics, however, over the centuries increasingly divided the natural from the supernatural end so as to render the impression that the virtue of love is an infused gift from God that is absolutely unrelated to any kind of human action or practice, or to a human's so-called "natural" end. This separation has affected the Christian approach to social ethics. What is unclear and endlessly debated in the tradition of Thomistic virtue ethics is the relations between practices, the cardinal virtues, and the virtue of love. It is in the interrelation between practices, virtues (St Maximus doesn't restrict himself to the cardinal virtues), and the manifestation of the virtue of love as the *telos* of the human that St Maximus can offer a substantive contribution to current discussions in virtue ethics.

In what follows, I wish to briefly outline some elements of St Maximus' understanding of the virtues as related to the virtue of virtues, which is love. I want to end with some suggestions for how and why St Maximus' account of the virtue makes a difference, especially in the human experience of violence.

Virtue and Love

In the writings of St Maximus the Confessor, communion with God, which is an embodied presencing of the divine, is simultaneous with the acquisition of virtue: Virtue is embodied deification. Within the Greek patristic texts, and I would also argue in Augustine, if deification means that if God is love, then the human was created to love. And this love is simultaneously a uniting oneself with God, since God

is love. As St Maximus himself says in his second letter, which is addressed to John: "And the divine and blessed love, which is fashioned from these and through which these come to be [by "these" he means the virtues], will embrace God and manifest the one who loves God to be God himself."[4] In his ascetical writings in particular, St Maximus discusses a trajectory of the manifestation of virtues through ascetical practices toward the manifestation of the virtue of virtues—Love. For St Maximus, the human is created to learn how to love and is in constant battle against that which weakens the capacity to love.

Virtue, for St Maximus, is not a building of character for character's sake; it is not a state of being where one displays one's virtues like badges of honor; it is not simply the basis for proper moral decision making within a particular context. The acquisition of virtue is the precondition for enabling the human capacity to love. As St Maximus says in his *Four-Hundred Chapters on Love*, "All the virtues assist the mind in the pursuit of divine love."[5] St Maximus does not restrict himself to only the four cardinal virtues but, consistent with the Eastern Christian patristic tradition, gives a wider catalogue of virtues and vices that correspond to the three parts of the soul: sensible, irascible, and the rational. The hermeneutical key to St Maximus' complicated detailing of the relation of virtues and vices to the inner life of the human person and to human agency is "progress in the love of God,"[6] which is measured ultimately by how one relates to others, especially those to whom one feels hatred or anger.[7] As St Maximus explains, "The one who sees a trace of hatred in his own heart through any fault at all toward any man whoever he may be makes himself completely foreign to the love for God, because love for God in no way admits of hatred for man."[8]

If virtues are embodied deification, the precondition for the learning of the virtue of virtues, which is love, then vice impairs the capacity for love. St Maximus explains that "[t]he purpose of divine Providence is to unify by an upright faith and spiritual love those who have been

[4] *Ep.* 2, in *Maximus the Confessor*, trans. Andrew Louth, (New York: Routledge, 1996), 87.
[5] *Carit.* 1, 11, in *Maximus the Confessor: Selected Writings*, trans. George C. Berthold (Paulist Press, 1985), 36.
[6] Ibid., 48.
[7] Ibid., 42.
[8] Ibid., 37.

separated in diverse ways by vice" (4.17). He elaborates that the "vice that separates you from your brother" includes "envying and being envied, hurting or being hurt, insulting or being insulted, and suspicious thoughts" (4.18-19). St Maximus is also astute to know that vice breeds vice; i.e., that it is not simply the doing of vice that harms the capacity for love, it is being "viced upon": "The things which destroy love are these: dishonor, damage, slander (either against faith or against conduct), beatings, blows, and so forth, whether these happen to oneself or to one's relatives or friends" (4.81). Vices produce and *are* such affective emotions as anger, hatred, and fear. Throughout his writings, St Maximus is attempting both to advise and exhort a form of training that can overcome what are ultimately corrosive emotions, no matter how justified.

Also relevant is St Maximus' discussion of the relation of images to the cultivation of vices and virtues. According to St Maximus, what often incites and reifies a vice are images or thoughts that present themselves to the human person. St Maximus explains that "Love and self-mastery keep the mind detached from things and from their representations... The whole war of the monk against demons is to separate the passions from the representations."[9] St Maximus also warns that when "insulted by someone or offended in any matter, then beware of angry thoughts, lest by distress they sever you from charity and place you in the region of hatred."[10] In terms of images that incite vice, this resistance is not a removal of the image, but a disabling of its power to evoke such feelings of anger or hatred. To be virtuous is to experience in the face of images the emotions and desires that cultivate authentic relationships.

Insofar as virtue is related to love, then virtues build relationships of intimacy, trust, compassion, empathy, friendship, sharing, caring, humility, and honesty: all that is apparently threatened by the experience of vice, which destroy relationships. According to St Maximus, the acquisition of virtue is a training, realized in and through certain practices, that forms both the body and the inner life (the soul) of the human person; virtue is a wiring of the self as openness to love.

[9] Ibid., 66.
[10] Ibid., 38.

Virtue and Violence

When it comes to the question of war, the Orthodox are probably most well known for asserting that there is no just war theory in the Orthodox tradition. Beyond that negative assertion, it is very difficult to discern what the Orthodox think about war. For the just war naysayers, it would not be difficult to find among the Orthodox such statements as, "[t]here is no just war, no just violence, no just revenge or recompense, no just accumulation of wealth."[11] In this statement, it is a little unclear why—other than for rhetorical effect—war, violence, revenge, and accumulation of wealth are grouped together, since the whole point of the idea of just war is to differentiate morally sanctioned forms of violence from those that are clearly immoral, such as revenge. From one of the leading Orthodox voices in ethics in the past fifty years, one hears how

> [t]hese two seminal writers [Ambrose and Augustine] led the Western Church not only to an acceptance of the military role by Christians, but to its enhancement into a positive virtue through the development of criteria by which a war could be distinguished from an unjust war, and be called "just." It is my contention that the East developed a different approach to the issue. Rather than seek to morally elevate war and Christian participation in it so that it could be termed "just," the East treated it as a necessary evil. . . .Contrary to Augustine . . . the Eastern Patristic tradition rarely praised war, and to my knowledge, almost never called it "just" or a moral good . . . . The East did not seek to deal with just war themes such as the correct conditions for entering war [*jus ad bellum*], and the correct conduct of war [*jus in bello*] on the basis of the possibility of the existence of a "just war," precisely because it did not hold to such a view of war.[12]

This denial of any form of just war theory in the Christian East is often extended to some form of praise for the Christian Roman Empire for embodying a primarily defensive, non-aggressive ethos in relation to war.[13]

[11] George Dragas, "Justice and Peace in the Orthodox Tradition," in *Justice, Peace and The Integrity of Creation: Insights from Orthodoxy*, ed. Gennadios Limouris (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990), 42.

[12] "The Teaching on Peace in the Fathers," in *Wholeness of Faith and Life: Orthodox Christian Ethics, Part One: Patristic Ethics* (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1999), 154.

[13] Ibid., 156-57.

One is tempted to attribute this denial of a just war theory, together with its praise of the Christian Roman attitude to war, as another example of self-identification of the Orthodox vis-à-vis the proximate other—the "West."[14] Even though something like this distorted apophaticism—Orthodoxy is what the West is not—may be operative in some Orthodox denials of just war theory, it is irrefutable that a "theory" of just war, consisting of distinctions between conditions for entering war and conditions for conducting war, together with their respective criteria, is nowhere to be found in what has come to be known as the Orthodox trajectory within the Christian tradition. Such an absence makes Fr. Alexander Webster's defense of a justifiable war tradition within Orthodoxy somewhat of an anomaly.[15] While admitting that the Orthodox tradition never developed a just war theory—on this point, there seems to be a consensus—Webster argues against the position that the Orthodox consistently saw war only as a necessary evil and never as a moral good. Webster amasses a pile of citations from biblical, patristic, canonical, liturgical, and imperial sources, which he feels collectively point to an affirmation of the moral value of war under certain conditions. As Webster argues, "[w]e hope the abundant textual and iconic evidence adduced in the present volume will restore among them [Orthodox bishops, theologians and activists] the longstanding traditional moral position that war may be engaged and conducted as a virtuous or righteous act, or at least as a 'lesser good' instead of a lesser or necessary evil."[16] In an ironic twist, Webster actually attributes the Orthodox denial of its own justifiable war tradition to the "flurry of ecumenical contacts with Western Christians and an accelerated emigration of Orthodox Christians to Western Europe and North America."[17] Instead of blaming the West for poisoning the East with notions of just or justifiable war, the West gets blamed by Webster for influencing the Orthodox to forget its justifiable war tradition. One way or the other, the Orthodox always seem to find a way to blame the West.

[14] For such examples of self-identification, see George Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou eds., *Orthodox Constructions of the 'West'* (Bronx: Fordham University Press, 2012).

[15] Alexander F.C. Webster and Darrell Cole, *The Virtue of War: Reclaiming the Classic Christian Traditions East and West* (Salisbury: Regina Orthodox Press Inc. 2004).

[16] Ibid., 118.

[17] Ibid.

The Orthodox, thus, agree that there is no just war "theory" in the Orthodox tradition in the form of distinctions between *jus in bello* and *jus ad bellum*, and their respective criteria; there is also consensus that within the tradition there is discussion about the need to go to war; the current debate, however, centers on how going to war is characterized: For Harakas, it is always a necessary evil; for Webster, under certain conditions, it is virtuous and of moral value. This difference, however, reveals another, more implicit, agreement between Harakas and Webster: although both agree there is no just war theory within the Orthodox tradition, both seem to operate within the moral categories and framework of the just war tradition. What the just war tradition attempts to discern is whether both the action to go to war and the conduct within war fall on the right/wrong moral divide. Although Harakas and Webster distance themselves from a just war theory, they are still looking for the moral categories that would establish certain actions to go to war and conduct within war on either side of the right/wrong divide. To characterize war as either a necessary evil, lesser evil, lesser good, justifiable, or as a virtuous and righteous act is to attempt to do the same thing that a just war theory tries to do—establish the moral rightness or wrongness of an act, given the specific conditions. Even such distinctions between killing as murder and killing for defense reinforce this particular moral framework that centers on the rightness or wrongness of moral acts. From a Christian perspective, the concern with the rightness or wrongness of moral acts has to do with one's positioning in relation to God and, in the end, with one's positioning within the eschatological consummation, or heaven.

What is remarkable about the entire debate is that there is little attention to what is arguably the core and central axiom of the Orthodox tradition—the principle of divine-human communion. Webster speaks of war as "virtuous," and yet pays absolutely no attention to the tradition of thinking on virtue in either the ascetical writings or in such thinkers as Maximus the Confessor; in both cases, the understanding of virtue is inherently linked to one's struggle toward communion with God—*theosis*. How exactly is claiming to have fought in a virtuous war, or to have killed virtuously consistent with this tradition of thinking on virtue in light of the principle of divine-human communion? Is it really the case that being virtuous in war means moving *toward* a deeper communion with God? Webster does not give an answer to these questions. Although Harakas does argue for the patristic bias for peace, approaching the issue from an eschatological perspective, his emphasis is still on how to label the action to go to war or the conduct during war, and there is no attention to war from the perspective of the Orthodox understanding of creation's destiny for communion with God.

It is very common in the United States now to hear of stories of combat soldiers from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. One hears horrible stories of combat veterans who have a difficult time simply being with their wives, their children, their friends, in bars, restaurants, social groups that give most of us some pleasure. They have a hard time keeping jobs, and many of them end up homeless on American streets. They are plagued by demonic images and memories of the war. There are many, many stories that I could give here, but I will restrict myself to the story of the combat veteran John, who was fighting with his fiancé about bus schedules. The argument escalated to the point where John became enraged and went into what is clinically called a "Berserk state."[18] He took a knife and cut his fiancé many times. After he awoke in the hospital, he could not remember what he did, and the first thing he asked was, "did I kill my daughter"?[19] In John's situation, what we see are two of the key vices that, according to St Maximus, get in the way of love: fear and anger. We don't see self-love here as much as self-hatred and self-loathing.

Combat soldiers are trained to kill, to treat all others as threats.[20] This training becomes intensified when in the combat situation, where the body is training itself to protect itself. In addition to the constant fear of violence, which can only provoke the feeling of anger, combat soldiers are put in situations where they must inflict violence, often on innocent non-combatants. What emphasis on just war theory does in the ethics of war is to fail to account for the effects of violence on the combat veteran's capacity to love: to love self in the proper way and to love the other, even the enemy or the stranger. This effect occurs on the

[18] For a definition of the "Berserk state," see Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and The Undoing of Character* (New York: Scribner, 1994).

[19] http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/359/life-after-death.

[20] Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (New York: Little, Brown and Company).

combat veteran even if it is clear that they are fighting on the supposedly "just" side of the war, as in World War II. The mistake that just war theory makes is not so much trying to establish criteria for thinking about justified uses of violence; but implying that simply because one is on the so-called just side of a war that his relationship with God is unaffected. Whether one is on the just or unjust side, the combat veteran's experience of violence will affect his relationship with God insofar as it affects his capacity to love.

If one is impaired in the ability to love, one is impaired in one's ability to be gifted with *theosis*. Jonathan Shay, one of the pioneers in the United States in treating combat veterans suffering from PTSD, describes the effects of the violence of war on the combat solider in terms of the "*ruin* of good character."[21] More recently, a new clinical diagnosis has emerged called "moral injury," which attempts to describe the particular effects of violence on the human.[22] If we follow St Maximus, which I think we should, this "ruin of good character" and "moral injury" must be understood in terms of the diminished capacity to love.

The effects of violence on the human is also clearly visible in the poor neighborhoods in the big cities of the United States (and I'm sure of Europe), where the threat of violence is constant. One teenager who lived in a poor neighborhood of Chicago, which is infested with violent gangs, described his neighborhood as a daily war zone. Related to this, one of the most difficult questions confronting educators in the United States is how to educate children in poorer neighborhoods, who are consistently underperforming in comparison with children in more middle-class or affluent neighborhoods. Paul Tough has recently reported on approaches to this problem that focus on character, such as the recent work and studies of the Nobel-Prize economist from the University of Chicago, James Heckman.[23] Tough describes how educators for decades were focusing on improving what are called "cognitive skills," which have to do with such things as reading and mathematics. Studies have shown that the skills correlated with success in such things

[21] Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, xiii.

[22] Kent Drescher, et. al., "An Exploration of the Viability and Usefulness of the Construct of Moral Injury in War Veterans." *Traumatology* 17:1 (2011): 8-13.

[23] Paul Tough, *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012).

as college graduation, or well-paying job are what are called "non-cognitive skills." It is the development of non-cognitive skills that allow for the development of cognitive skills. Examples of non-cognitive skills are self-control, impulse control, anger management, delayed gratification, or thinking before making a bad decision. If you have not noticed already, these sound a lot like St Maximus' virtues.

What they have also discovered is that the stress from adverse experiences in childhood, such as the experience of violence or the threat of violence, can prevent non-cognitive skills from developing properly. If a child has experienced four or more adverse effects as a child, she is thirty-two times more likely to develop learning problems. If a child is experiencing the constant threat of violence in the home, the stress that such a threat generates can prevent the development of the part of the brain responsible for non-cognitive skills. Another way it was explained is this: if one is in the forest and is confronted by a bear, then the part of the brain responsible for aggression will activate and the part of the brain responsible for reading and writing will deactivate in order for the person to prepare for an emergency response. Such an emergency response, however, is meant to be infrequent. For some children living in a family home situation in which the threat of violence is constant, the brain responds as if facing a bear every single day. If the emergency response of the brain is activated repeatedly, the brain forms pathways that get increasingly ingrained. In day-to-day situations, this means that it is difficult for such children to learn reading and mathematics in class when the brain is constantly on emergency response mode. It also explains why such children are plagued with two of the vices that St Maximus says get in the way of love—fear and anger. It is not uncommon for such children to have behavioral problems in school that often manifest themselves in rage. Being surrounded by or experiencing violence can actually form the brain in such a way as to form the vices of fear and anger (again, not necessarily self-love as much as self-loathing). These vices are impairing the ability to be in the kind of relationships that would not simply allow for love to occur, but to allow for learning to occur.

What was also interesting about these studies is that it is being shown how proper attachment to a parent or parents can help a child manage the stress of adverse situations. In other words, the development of proper relations through the virtues can counter the vices

formed through the experience or threat of violence. What's most hopeful is that these non-cognitive skills can be learned even throughout adulthood; in other words, the human was created in such a way that these non-cognitive skills can be learned no matter the age of the person. What is really remarkable about all this, at least for me, is the connection between all that these studies are showing with all that St Maximus says about the interrelation between the manifestation of the virtues and contemplation.

What I have attempted to suggest in this paper is that St Maximus' account of virtue can disrupt the current status quo in both philosophical and theological virtue ethics by offering a thick understanding of the human *telos* as one that entails learning how to love. And while Thomistic virtue ethics provides a thick understanding of the human self, the nature/grace divide that haunts Thomistic virtue ethics separates love from the natural good inherent to being human, which leads to an emphasis on social justice in terms of human rights to social goods, such as healthcare, just wages, etc. I think St Maximus' account can and should affirm all that, and more. It can offer an account of virtue that can both illuminate the effects of violence and poverty on being human, specifically on the human capacity to love and to form relationships, and can contribute to the interdisciplinary effort of understanding how the cultivation of virtues leads to human flourishing in areas such as education, or how the cultivation of virtues mitigates the effects of violence and poverty.

St. John Chrysostom once said that even the poor need virtue. St Maximus helps us to understand this comment in the sense that what is distinctive about an Orthodox social ethics for today goes well beyond simply helping the poor during a time of need, or advocating for systemic change. By never wavering in its understanding of the human being as being created to learn how to love, a Christian social ethics offers the very wisdom of the practices needed to form the human being in the virtues that would allow the human to mitigate the effects of poverty and violence and enable the person to learn how to love, which is nothing less, according to St Maximus, than the experience of God. If poverty and violence potentially depersonalize and render the human being faceless, then the ascetical practices that manifest the virtues and that enable the capacity to love are essential for the realization of the person as a eucharistic being in the world that is free (*ekstatic*) and irreducibly unique (*hypostatic*).

IV

The Interplay of Interpretations

The Interpretive Dance: Concealment, Disclosure, and Deferral of Meaning in Maximus the Confessor's Hermeneutical Theology

Paul M. Blowers

I launch this brief essay on the premise that we cannot understand the hermeneutical enterprise of Maximus—or any other patristic interpreter, for that matter—simply by identifying his exegetical techniques (grammatical, rhetorical, etc.) or his map of variant scriptural "senses." Foremost is his theological engagement of the very conditions under which divine revelation is even possible, in which case interpreting Scripture and contemplating creation require at once an adjustment to these conditions and a disciplined testing of their constraints and opportunities—this because the larger οἰκονομία of divine revelation subsumes also its reception, interpretation, and performance.

For Maximus, divine revelation—if I may borrow some insights from Jean-Luc Marion—is a pure and utterly "saturating" gift, defying any and all attempts to compress it linguistically and conceptually. "*Always* and *in all things*," as the Confessor famously writes in *Ambiguum* 7, "the Logos who is God wills to realize the mystery of his embodiment." Revelation is accordingly both *incarnational* and *eschatological*. It is the saturating gift of the divine Logos in his absolute freedom to create, reveal, redeem, transform, deify—in an eschatologically "simultaneous" epiphany—through material flesh, text, symbol, and the differentiated λόγοι of every creature and every virtue. Unlike Derrida's *logos*, inexorably deferred and all the more alienated by linguistic or discursive attempts to render it present,

Maximus' Logos is elusive precisely in the overwhelming *immediacy* of his gracious, self-presencing approach. He takes his stand at the revelatory threshold, the incarnate Word who "teaches θεολογία," personally commanding any and all access to the ineffable mysteries of the triune God and God's purposes in creation.

I propose here that, unlike the Cappadocians and Dionysius, who privileged the Sinai Theophany (cf. Ex. 19:1-25; 24:15-18; 33:11-23) as the classic biblical icon of the mystery of revelation, Maximus follows Origen in privileging the Transfiguration of Jesus because it provides an *incarnationally-situated* tableau of the complex dynamics of revelation, a kind of iconic miniature of the cosmic mystery of Christ. In this tableau there is sustained action or motion (Peter, James, and John, and so too the spiritually worthy here and now, ascending with Christ to Mt. Tabor to participate in proportion to their maturity); but this gives way to an overwhelming intensity, an eschatological "present" that freezes the scene, collapsing past and future into it, as the Savior's face and garments suddenly become radiant, laying siege to all perception. This, revelatory "moment" in turn funds a dialectics of concealment and disclosure relevant to *all* the Logos' "incarnations." In the idiom of Dionysius, Maximus relishes the paradox whereby the transfigured Logos, "in appearing conceals himself, and in hiding manifests himself." Flesh, and especially "face," the commanding focal-point of the vision, communicate the saturating mystery of divine approach, which, superficially devoid of "form and beauty" (Isa. 53:2), communicates a unique incarnational beauty "beyond the sons of men" (Ps. 44:3, LXX), utterly purging its witnesses' senses and reducing them to a kind of hermeneutical ground-zero, while opening up, as Marion would say, an *infinite* horizon of meanings and effects. It is the Face which "speaks" and issues its "call" in silence, by the overwhelming power of its own Gaze. And there remains, irrevocably, the radical distance, the diastemic gap (διάστημα) between creaturely knowledge and the God/Logos who is "beyond essence" (ὑπερουσίος), and who alone, amid the absolute mutual otherness of Creator and creature, enjoys the prerogative graciously to "transgress" that gap, providing any and all hope for human discourse and interpretive experience.

Rather than digress here into the character of Maximus' apophaticism, I wish to argue that this dialectics of disclosure and concealment

registers concretely in the Confessor's scriptural hermeneutics. Recalling the Transfiguration, Christ's luminous garments already evoke for Maximus the material "texts" of Scripture *and* creation, or of "written law" and "natural law," which, analogous to Christ's face, simultaneously enable and frustrate contemplation. "They disclose him through utterance (τῇ λέξει) and appearance (τῷ φαινομένῳ) and yet hide him through spiritual intuition (τῇ νοήσει) and what is concealed (τῷ κρυπτομένῳ)." The *immediacy* of the person of the Logos who freely incarnates himself in flesh (and face), text, symbol, and the variegated *logoi* of things, stands in purposive tension with the hard reality that for the interpreter all these are *mediating* agents are indeed thoroughly rooted in diastemic existence. In *Ambiguum* 37, moreover, Maximus asserts that the Logos, who transcends all the intrinsic binaries of historical revelation (present and future, shadow and truth, figure and archetype), nonetheless "gathers all these things unto himself, since he is man and God, and indeed also beyond all humanity and divinity." In this way, again, he paradoxically defies and empowers participatory interpretation of his incarnational mystery. All interpretation, in turn, must begin (and end) in a posture of worship, an apophatic reverence or even silence that "praises [the Word] as being completely uncontained." Maximus opens *Ad Thalassium* 48 with a kind of exegete's prayer:

> Come, Logos of God, worthy of all praise, grant us proportionately the revelation of your own words, removing altogether the thickness of any shrouds. Show us, Christ, the beauty of spiritual meanings. Seize our right hand—that is, our intellectual faculty—and "Guide us in the ways of your commandments" (Ps. 118:35, LXX). Lead us into "the place of your wondrous tabernacle, even unto the house of God, with a voice of exaltation and thanksgiving, and with the celebrative sound of one who is keeping festival" (Ps. 41:5, LXX), that we too, by celebrating in praxis and exulting in contemplation, and being found worthy of coming to your ineffable place of feasting, may make sound together with those who are spiritually feasting there, and begin to sing the knowledge of unspeakable truths with the voices of the mind....

Indeed, interpretation must first, in some sense, "languish" in the boundless distance (διάστημα) separating Creator and creature, though unlike Gregory of Nyssa, who dwells at length on the severe diastemic

constraints on human linguistic and conceptual attempts to grasp at God, Maximus shows arguably greater confidence in the stabilizing personal presence of the Logos. His chosen metaphor for Scripture is an orderly "cosmos" indwelled by the Logos, not an abyss or darkness.

The dialectics of disclosure and concealment, immanence and transcendence, is in turn the matrix or theater of what I shall call the "interpretive dance," the playful performance that is scriptural exegesis. Such fits with Maximus' compelling image, appropriated from Gregory Nazianzen, of the Logos who "on high plays in all sorts of forms, mingling with his world here and there as he so desires," in a "foolishness" (1 Cor. 1:25) that actually signals the sublime *excess* (ὑπερβολή) of his incarnational wisdom, which applies by extension to the Logos' condescension into Scripture. Quoting Dionysius on the divine ἔρως and ecstasy, Maximus describes how the Logos,

> ...in the overflow of his passionate goodness (ἐρωτικῆς ἀγαθότητος) is drawn outside himself in his provident care for everything. Beguiled, as it were, by his own goodness, love, and sheer yearning (ἔρωτι), he is enticed away from his dwelling place above and beyond all things, condescending to penetrate all things according to an ecstatic and supernatural power wherewith he can still remain within himself.

The interpretive dance requires the exegete to play along, as it were, to enter into the Logos' game of hide-and-seek. Material, phenomenal—and so too *textual*—things are intrinsically precarious; they shake us off by their "flux and instability" (τὸ ἀπορρεῖν καὶ μὴ ἵστασθαι), but the Logos still uses them all the more to advance us toward *theologia*. The exegete must, then, tackle the slippery slope of scriptural language itself and, among other things, negotiate the διττὸς τρόπος ("double modality") whereby all the Bible's language, both the elevated and the profane, at once accesses us to the Logos and restrains us from him, or else leads us by affirmation (θέσις) toward spiritual meanings (λόγοι) while inducing us by denial (ἀφαίρησις) to spurn what is illusory.

Because the Logos' play is a saturation or sublime excess (ὑπερβολή) of his incarnational wisdom, the exegete is forced as well to engage the truly endless possibilities of transformative meaning. Maximus assumes from Origen and a long patristic hermeneutical tradition that Scripture is predesigned or "economized" by the Logos and Holy Spirit to problematize, sometimes to scandalize, to undermine superficiality, and yet, because the Word is inexhaustible and uncontainable (ἀπερίγραφος), to hold forth Scripture's polyvalences. The genre of *aporiae* in the *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, *Quaestiones et dubia*, and *Quaestiones ad Theopemptum* was much more conducive than line-by-line commentary to meeting such challenges. Maximus consistently sets out multiple possible understandings of a biblical text, referring to them as diverse intuitions (ἐπινοίαι) or attempted readings (ἐπιβολαί), and he takes into account the diversity of prospective meanings even for individual words or names. Though the Confessor presupposes the Alexandrian doctrine of the anagogical pedagogy of the Logos, who accommodates the Bible's insights to the level of interpreters' spiritual aptitude, he rarely if ever arranges multiple meanings in an ascending scale from the most literal to the most spiritually rarefied. In the dance through the fecundity and polyvalence of Scripture, the interpreter is forced to realize the speculative character of interpretation and the need for relentless "research" (ἐξέτασις). Even pious conjecture (στοχασμός), which Maximus most likely learned from Gregory of Nyssa, is warranted:

> It is not improper, in view of that faculty in us that naturally longs for the knowledge of divine things, to undertake a conjecture about higher truths, as long as two good things from the conjecture exhibit themselves to those who possess genuine reverence for divine realities. For the one who approaches the divine realities conjecturally either attains to intelligible truth and, rejoicing, offers the "sacrifice of praise" (Ps. 49:14, 23, LXX; Heb. 13:15), thanksgiving, to the Giver of the knowledge of what was sought, or he finds that the meaning of the scriptures alludes him, and reveres the divine truths all the more by learning that the acquisition of them exceeds his own ability.

On very rare occasions, of course, Maximus deferred to the principle of "honoring in silence" a mystery of revelation that ultimately defied human penetration. Meanwhile, Holy Scripture (like the "text" of the cosmos itself) continues to yield a plethora of evocations, an unceasing *sensus plenior* that the Confessor calls "the power of the literal meaning in the Spirit, which is always abounding into its fullness."

One final crucial aspect of the "interpretive dance" in Maximus' hermeneutical theology is what I shall call its "erotic" (ἐρωτική) dimen-

sion, drawing particularly from the legacies of Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Dionysius. In the not-so-distant background is Origen's lucid image, describing the nuptial intimacy between the Logos and the soul in his *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, of an unfolding drama of give-and-take as the soul struggles with the "wound" of the Savior's passionate love. Such was echoed in Nyssen's *Homilies on the Song* as well, and both writers provided a precedent for portraying not just the Song but the whole hermeneutical enterprise itself in terms of the Logos' sublime seduction. Implicit in Maximus' hermeneutical theology is the presumption that the person of the Logos himself stages the interpretive διάβασις toward God that engages all one's intellectual, contemplative, *and affective* faculties—all the more so since the conversion of human desire in its varied dimensions is instrumental within the mystery of deification. In the *Ad Thalassium*, where he routinely allegorizes scriptural *πράγματα* as symbolic of the inner struggles and transformation of the soul's rational, epithymetic, and thymetic powers, Maximus is less intent on furnishing a taxonomy of meanings than on surrendering to the action of the indwelling Logos to lure, romance, and reorient the passible self. Maximus shows sympathy with Nyssen's view that the Logos paradoxically satisfies the soul's desires precisely by eluding them or rather infinitely dilating them.

As I briefly mentioned earlier, unlike Derrida's perpetually deferred *logos*, the Logos in Maximus' hermeneutical theology *personally* commands the dynamics of revelation. In the relentless continuum of interpretation, he allows epiphanies of himself without ever fully divulging himself and, by implication, defers the ultimate disclosure of his mystery to the final consummation of his altogether *incarnational* mystery.

Important recent studies of the precise ontological and metaphysical ramifications of Maximus' theology and apophaticism have explored the dialectics by which he allows for the "real" presence of the indwelling Logos while also eternally deferring his *essential* presence. I find especially satisfying Christos Yannaras' view, as a trenchant reader of Maximus, that "the personal immediacy of God is affirmed through his ontic absence," with the Logos availing himself through "erotic" and "ecstatic" epiphanies, funding a communion engendered thoroughly by the triune God going "beyond himself." The character of this communion, and the

interconnections of Maximus' hermeneutics with his ecclesial and sacramental theology, defy the scope of this short essay. It must suffice to affirm that embedded deep within Maximus' hermeneutical theology is the conviction that the exegesis of Holy Scripture is never a matter of individualistic apprehensions enthroning the human subject, but of a thoroughly ecclesial and multifaceted orientation to the transfiguring Logos, grounded in what Nikolaos Loudovikos has ably shown to be a profoundly dialogical—and indeed Eucharistic—ontology that elicits a radically new realism in creatures' encounter with the life-giving, saturating, and deifying Word of God. Hopefully here I have been able to indicate something of how the "interpretive dance," under the conditions of divine concealment, disclosure, and deferral, is but a perpetual incursion into the unfathomable depths of that mystery, made possible only by the Logos' own multiple "transgressions" or incursions into diastemic reality.

John the Evangelist as John the Forerunner? First Thoughts on the Use of Scripture in *Ambiguum* 21

George Parsenios

"John introduces John..."
Eriugena, *The Voice of the Eagle*

In his celebrated 28th Oration,[1] Gregory the Theologian refers to one of the more famous passages in the Gospel of John, the passage which says: "But there are also many other things which Jesus did; which, if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that would be written" (21:25). The passage is familiar to all, but St. Gregory cites it in a way that is not at all familiar, because he refers to the author of the passage as "John, the Forerunner of the Word." John the Forerunner, according to St. Gregory, is not John the Baptist; he is John the Evangelist. Gregory seems to have the wrong John. He has used the epithet of the Baptist for the Evangelist. Some readers might argue that Gregory simply made a mistake. St Maximus believes otherwise. In his *Ambiguum* 21, Maximus finds great significance in the fact that Gregory calls the Evangelist a "forerunner." The argument of *Ambiguum* 21, and especially the use of Scripture in that argument, is the focus of the present paper.

[1] Gregory the Theologian, *Oration* 28.20 (SC 250:142, lines 16-18). All translations of Maximus the Confessor in this paper are taken, with gratitude, from the translation by Maximos (Constas) of Simonopetra, *The Ambigua of Maximos the Confessor* (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library; Harvard University Press, forthcoming), and the section divisions are those of this text.

In *Ambiguum* 21, Maximus relies on many of the interpretive principles and develops many of the theological themes typical of his work. The conventional character of much of his argument might obscure the fact that Maximus seems very attuned to the particular problem at hand. He is not merely imposing onto this problem the same ready-made solution that he applies to every problem, but has tailored his argument to the particular problem at hand, especially the verse that Gregory cites from the Gospel of John. The vast and complicated machinery that drives the argument in this *Ambiguum* seems always to have in mind the verse that Gregory cites from John 21:25 (that the world could not contain the books that would be written if all of Jesus' signs were narrated), and this verse is later coupled with two other lines from the Gospel of John. It would appear that Gregory sees the problem in this *Ambiguum* as a Johannine problem that deserves a Johannine solution. Showing the relevance of the Gospel of John for the argument of *Ambiguum* 21 is my purpose in what follows.

One preliminary matter deserves attention first, because it will set the stage for seeing parallels between the thought of Maximus and the theology of the Gospel of John. In a way that seems to anticipate this *Ambiguum*, the Gospel of John itself gives both the Evangelist and the Baptist a shared epithet. In the Gospel, the shared epithet is not "forerunner," but "witness." John the Evangelist and John the Baptist are both witnesses. Furthermore, the two figures share this title based on the same verse that drives the thought of St Maximus, John 21:25. We can look for a moment at the Gospel of John to see how this works.

John the Baptist is the first witness. In fact, in this Gospel, he is never called a Baptist. He is only and always called a "witness" (*martys*). His job is to testify (*martyrein*). In the early lines of the Prologue, we read, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for the purpose of *testimony* (*marturian*) so that he might *testify* (*martyrêsê*) to the light, so that all might believe through him" (1:6-7). A few verses later when the Prologue transitions into the Gospel narrative, the first lines of the narrative proper announce, "This is the *testimony* (*martyria*) given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?'" (1:19). Finally, even at the baptism of Jesus, the Baptist does not actually baptize. He merely testifies about the baptism, when we read (1:32-34),

> Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One."

In this way, the testimony of John the Baptist opens the Gospel of John.

Testimony also closes the Gospel of John, only now it is the testimony of the Evangelist. The Evangelist, too, is a witness. And he shares this title with the Baptist based on same passage that Gregory the Theologian quoted, John 21:25. As the Gospel draws to a close, we read the following:

> This is the disciple who is testifying (marturôn) to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony (martyria) is true. But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.[2]

The Gospel of John, thus, opens and closes with testimony,[3] and this way of opening and closing unites the work of the Baptist and the Evangelist.

In the eyes of some scholars, their association is even closer. In the first chapter of John, the ministry of John the Baptist yields to the ministry of Jesus, and the disciples of the Baptist turn and follow Jesus.[4] At 1:35-37 we read,

[2] See also the scene from the foot of the cross, where the Evangelist seems again to be identified as a witness (19:34-35).

[3] The notion of testimony, not incidentally, is important for all the literature in the Johannine circle. In a manner that seems to imitate the Gospel, the Book of Revelation also opens and closes with testimony, announcing at the beginning, "The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who *testifies* to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the *testimony* of Jesus Christ." The Book of Revelation draws to a close as follows (22:20-21; see also 22:16): "He who *testifies* to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen." 1 John follows the same model, referring in its opening lines (1:1-2) to "what we have seen and testify," while 3 John closes in a way that subtly imitates the closing of the Gospel, as follows: "You know that our testimony is true. I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink" (3 John 12b-13). For a monograph length discussion of testimony in the Gospel of John, see Andrew Lincoln, *Truth on Trial* (Peabody, MA; Hendrickson, 2000).

[4] For a full discussion of the various passages brought to bear on determining the identity and function of the "Disciple whom Jesus loved," see Harold W. Attridge, "The Restless Quest

> The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus.

Later, we hear that one of these two anonymous disciples is Andrew, the brother of Peter (1:40). The name of the other disciple is never given. He is left anonymous. Many interpreters believe that this unnamed disciple is the Evangelist, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (13:23-25; 19:26-27; 20:1-10; 21:20-24). If that is true, then the Evangelist not only mirrors the ministry of the Baptist, in the sense that both are witnesses who testify, but his testimony actually has its origins in the Baptist's testimony. Furthermore, this would open the discussion up to include other books attributed to John the Evangelist, especially the Book of Revelation. For, the Book of Revelation refers to Jesus as the Lamb (22:1), and it is in these early scenes of the Gospel of John that John the Baptist refers to Jesus as the "Lamb of God" (1:29, 36), a theme which is taken up again and again in Christian art to connect the witness of John the Baptist and John the Evangelist.[5]

Pursuing this fruitful line of inquiry any further would take us far from our present concern, though. For now, I would like to emphasize a more limited fact. In the same way that Maximus links the Baptist and the Evangelist by the name "forerunner," so does the Gospel of John itself link them by the shared name of "witness." Moreover, the two figures share this title on the basis of the same verse that led Gregory, and then Maximus, to associate them so closely, John 21:25. If the Evangelist follows the Baptist in being a witness, he does so by writing his Gospel. Having seen that this verse unites the Baptist and the Evangelist as *witnesses* in the thought of the Gospel of John, we are better prepared to see how this verse unites the two as *forerunners* in the thought of Maximus the Confessor.

Ambiguum 21 closes with a series of explicitly exegetical paragraphs. The last four sections of the *Ambiguum* are devoted to Scripture, and the passage from John 21 appears at both the beginning and the end of

for the Beloved Disciple," pp. 71-80 in *Early Christian Voices: In Texts, Traditions, and Symbols: Essays in Honor of Francois Bovon* (David H. Warren, Ann Graham Brock, and David W. Pao, eds.; BIS 66; Leiden: Brill, 2003).

[5] See Jeffrey Hamburger, *St. John the Divine: The Deified Evangelist in Medieval Art and Theology* (Berkeley: University of California, 2002) 65-82.

this line of argument. Maximus cites John 21:24-25 in full when he opens the scriptural discussion by saying (21.12-13),

> But let us return to the main point....When John the Evangelist said, "There are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written," he made it clear to us with these words that his writings were but a preliminary smoothing of the way for the more perfect and heretofore incomprehensible Word.

Three sections later, Maximus draws this exegetical argument to a close by referring to this Johannine passage again when he says (21.16), "But He has not yet revealed the mysteries that are hidden silently within Him, because for the time being 'the whole world could not contain them.'" Thus, the explicitly exegetical portion of the argument begins and ends with John 21:25. The discussion begins and ends with this passage.

Another pair of verses from the Gospel of John appears at a critical point in the argument, the lines that read (16:12-13), "I have much more to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth." By turning to these verses, Maximus seems not only to identify the problem as a Johannine problem, but he also sees the solution as a Johannine solution. The connection between these verses and John 21 is obvious on one level, though they are not exactly the same. The connection arises from the fact that both verses explain that the message contained in the Gospel is not "complete," although the reasons they give for explaining the incomplete character of the Gospel are not the same. John 21 explains that the Gospel is incomplete because there is simply too much to say. If everything were included, the world could not contain the books that would be written. John 16 is different. Not the world, but the disciples themselves would be unable to bear the full message of Christ's revelation. The basic idea is the same—that the message is too great to bear—but the reason for its being too great to bear differs from passage to passage. How does Maximus connect them?

He first cites John 16:12, where Jesus announces, "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now," and he writes as follows:

> ...The Lord Himself...says: "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now," indicating to them a teaching that

> is more sublime than the one that preceded it, but which is itself lower than that which would follow through the divine Spirit.

When Maximus says that the message of Jesus "is more sublime than the one that preceded it," he refers to the teaching of the Law. In saying so, he echoes the famous line from the opening Prologue of John, where we read, "The Law came through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (1:17). Later in John, Jesus says explicitly, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, because he was speaking about me" (John 5:46). According to John, then, the teaching of Jesus is, in the words of Maximus, "more sublime than the one that preceded it."

And yet, John not only sees the revelation of Moses as finding its clarification in Jesus, He also sees the revelation of Jesus as pointing as well to a future revelation. Several texts in John point to a final, fuller revelation to come when the disciples will understand more fully, and perform miracles even more grand the ones associated with Jesus' ministry (14:12), especially passages related to the coming of the Spirit-Paraclete (14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). Maximus finds great significance in the discussion of the Paraclete. For if John teaches that the message is too great to be shared now, it will be shared sometime in the future—through the Paraclete.

To explain how this is so, Maximus turns to Hebrews. He understands three periods of divine revelation that he labels by the terms shadow, image, and truth, and he turns to Hebrews 10:1 to explain this tripartite division, but once again, his argument ends with the verse from John 16:13: "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the *truth*." The word truth is his chief concern, and his foray into Hebrews is designed to explain this word. The verse from Hebrews says, "The law has but a shadow... of the good things to come; it was not the image of the realities themselves." For Maximus, the terms shadow and image used here are important, such that the law was the *shadow*, which was superseded by the *image*, which is the Gospel, but the Gospel still points forward to further revelation of the *truth*. Hebrews provides the bases for his tripartite division of shadow, image and truth. And yet, even this foray into Hebrews is designed to bring us back to the Gospel of John. The three divisions that Maximus develops with the help of Hebrews—*shadow*, *image* and *truth*—are a way of explaining what Jesus means in the Gospel of John about how, in the future and fuller revelation, the Spirit of *truth* will bring "all *truth*." John 16:12-13 are cited as follows at the end of this argument (21:15-16):

> And the Lord Himself bears witness to this when He says: *I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now*, indicating to them a teaching that is more sublime than the one that preceded it, but which is itself lower than that which would follow through the divine Spirit. And thus He rightly added that, *when the Spirit of truth comes, He will lead you into all truth....*

A line from the Gospel of Matthew (28:20) and another from 1 Corinthians (9:22) are quickly added to the discussion, but the discussion concludes a few lines later when Maximus returns to the passage from John that started everything, when he says (21.16), "But He has not yet revealed the mysteries that are hidden silently within Him, because for the time being 'the whole world could not contain them.'" We are back again to John 21:25. Maximus has also coordinated John 21:25 with the teaching in the Gospel of John about how the revelation of Jesus relates to the Law of Moses in the past, and to the revelation of the Paraclete in the future. The Gospel supercedes the Law of Moses, but is still to be followed by the future revelation in the Paraclete.

For the Gospel of John, of course, the revelation of the Paraclete is not new revelation. Raymond Brown is correct to draw our attention to John 15:15, where Jesus says, "I revealed to you everything I heard from the Father." [6] Everything has already been revealed. The further revelation seems not to offer new teaching but rather to offer new insight into what has already been taught. John 16:14 solidifies the belief that the Paraclete offers no new teaching, because Jesus there says, "He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will declare to you." In the same way that Jesus reveals only what the Father gives to him, so the Spirit reveals only what he receives from Jesus. Within the theology of John's Gospel, this further revelation seems to be the post-resurrection understanding that is impossible before Jesus is glorified. We read several times in John things like John 12:16, "His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about him, and that they did these things to him" (See 2:22; 7:39). The Para-

[6] Raymond Brown, *The Gospel according to John* (AB 29A; New York: Doubleday, 1970) 2.714

clete empowers the disciples to understand the ministry of Jesus after the Resurrection in a way that they could not understand it before the Resurrection. The revelation of the Paraclete is not so much a new revelation, then, as it is a further degree of insight into the revelation of Jesus. Jesus promised, "If you abide in my word...you will know the truth" (8:31-2). This saying is fulfilled through the Paraclete, who will guide the disciples "into all truth."

Maximus presents the revelations in the Law, the Gospel, and the Paraclete through the language of shadow, image, and truth. In his hands, the revelation of the Paraclete provides the final insight into the revelation of Jesus in the Gospel. The passage about the Paraclete explains how this is so. Although texts from Hebrews, Matthew, and 1 Corinthians play critical roles in the interpretation, the basic concern is to coordinate two texts from the Gospel of John that express the incomplete character of the Gospel. The passage from John 21, where we read that the world could not contain the narration of the whole ministry of Christ, is explored and explained in reference to John 16:12-13, in which the disciples themselves are said not to be able to bear the full weight of Jesus' revelation. The explanatory value of John 16 lies in the mention of the Paraclete, the messenger of the full revelation to come. John 16:12-13 explains John 21:25. Again, a Johannine problem is given a Johannine solution.

John 21:25, thus, provides the focal point of the explicitly exegetical sections of the *Ambiguum*. Its influence, though, is not confined to this explicitly exegetical section. By far the greater part of the *Ambiguum* is devoted to theological contemplation of the problem at hand. The theological contemplation takes 12 sections, and the scriptural discussion only four. But even in this much larger theological section, the presence of John 21 seems determinative. How so? First, when Gregory the Theologian cited John 21, he altered it a bit. He did not merely quote the phrase, "The world itself could not contain them." He added an adjective, saying: "the *lower* world itself could not contain them."

This mention of a "lower world" as the world to which the Gospel of John is confined seems to Maximus to be an obvious opening for him to reflect on the nature of *Diabasis*. *Diabasis*, of course, means "transit," and in Maximus' thought, it refers to what Sherwood calls the transit

"from the temporal and the present to the everlasting."[7] Blowers defines it as the "transition from sensible to intelligible reality."[8] In the contemplative reflection that follows, Maximus makes several of his standard interpretive moves related to this understanding of diabasis. Since the Gospel is confined to the "lower world," Maximus begins there.

To make the connection between the Gospel of John and the physical world, Maximus extends his discussion to all four Gospels, and the number four is suggestive in several directions. As Paul Blower's writes, Maximus sees "the Bible and the created world as mutually analogous—indeed interchangeable—economies of divine revelation."[9] This is so because the *logoi* of all things in the cosmic order, no less than all things in the Bible, reflect the order in the universe oriented around the Logos. Based on this assumption, Maximus argues that there are four Gospels because there are four elements of the cosmic world—air, fiery ether, water, and earth (21.5)—as well as four chief virtues—understanding (or phronêsis), courage (or andreia), temperance (or sophrosyne), and justice (or dikaiosyne). Each Gospel corresponds to a particular virtue and to a particular physical element, because "every thought capable of forming an impression in the intellect is nothing other than an elementary outline, pointing to realities that are beyond it" (21.5).

But once he establishes the importance of the number four, he collapses the four categories into fewer categories. This, too, is a standard move. In *Ambiguum* 10, five categories define how one should understand the natural world, while in *Ambiguum* 37, he envisions 10 modes for interpreting Scripture. These several modes and categories, though, can be viewed from various perspectives, but they also gradually contract.[10] Eventually, the many contract into the one, the Sublime Logos, Christ himself. Here in *Ambiguum* 21, we read that the soul, if it "makes

[7] Polycarp Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of St. Maximus the Confessor* (Studia Anselmiana 36; Rome, 1955) 10.

[8] Paul Blowers, *Exegesis and Spiritual Pedagogy in Maximus the Confessor: An Investigation of the* Quaestiones ad Thalassium (Notre Dame, 1991) 98.

[9] Idem, "The World in the Mirror of Holy Scripture: Maximus the Confessor's Short Hermeneutical Treatise in Ambiguum ad Joannem 37," in *In Dominico Eloquio / In Lordly Eloquence: Essays on Patristic Exegesis in Honor of Robert Louis Wilken* (ed. Paul M. Blowers, Angela Russell Christman, David E. Hunter, and Robin Darling Young; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 409.

[10] Ibid, 423 and passim.

proper use of the senses...will know the manifold *logoi* of beings" (21.8), and will be able to "combine" these four virtues into just two: wisdom and gentleness (21.9). But the combining and collapsing of categories continues. "In turn," Maximus says, "the soul draws together these two more general virtues into the most general virtue of all, by which I mean love, which enraptures those who take their origin from it, leads forward those who abide within it, and unites those who, having set out toward it, strayed not from its course, and in it attained their goal; above all, love is that power which preeminently divinizes all" (21.9). This is the *diabasis* from sensible and present realities to spiritual and future realities. As Maximus writes,

> "All of these things will come about if the soul, as I have said, uses its own powers properly, and if, consistent with God's purpose, it passes through the sensible world by way of the spiritual logoi that exist within it, so that with understanding it arrives at God" (21.12).

But the entire discussion of *diabasis*, begins when Maximus opens his argument by saying,

> I believe that when the godly-minded teacher, in contrast to the literal sense of Scripture, called the great apostle John by the name of "Forerunner," he wanted to suggest that the great Evangelist, by means of his Gospel, is the forerunner of a greater and more mystical Word, which he points to, but which cannot be expressed in letters nor uttered with sounds made by a tongue of flesh...(21.3).

The important phrase here seems to be "by means of his Gospel." Writing a Gospel makes John a forerunner, because when Gregory called him a forerunner, he was referring to John 21:25, the phrase which says "the world could not contain the books that would be written." Even in this less explicitly exegetical section, the statement in John 21 seems still to be determinative for the argument. The *diabasis* from sensible to spiritual realities begins with the fact that John writes a Gospel in the sensible world. Maximus is explaining what Gregory said by reference to the verse that Gregory cited. John 21:25 seems to drive even this early part of the *Ambiguum*. When Maximus concludes this stage in his argument and turns more explicitly to Scripture, he says, "But let us return to the main point." He then explicitly cites John 21:25. I would suggest that he never left that verse behind.

Contextualization and Actualization of St Maximus' Textual and Spiritual Heritage

Nino Sakvarelidze

A preliminary note with key terms

- Topic, tasks, and objectives

This article deals with the issue of a "new approach" to the "old," i.e., of the contemporary reading and understanding of the patristic texts,[1] exemplified in the reception of St Maximus' textual and spiritual heritage.

Here, a multi-dimensional scientific approach seems to be helpful, applying a complex of research methods embracing theological as well as philosophical, philological as well as historical, contextual,[2] comparative, and systematic methods. I believe that the huge multi-dimensional work of St Maximus necessarily demands such a multi-dimensionality and complexity of research.

I would like to underline this point as a perspective of our international research on Maximus the Confessor.

The article focuses on two central questions:

Contextualization of St Maximus the Confessor's traditional-synthetic as well as innovative-systematic thought[3] within the old Geor-

[1] On the approach to the patristic Tradition see G. Florovsky: Patristic Theology and the Ethos of the Orthodox Church. In: G. Florovsky: *Collected Works*, vol. IV, Belmont MA 1987, part II, 15-22; see also A. Louth: "They Speak to Us across the Centuries, 4, St. Maximus the Confessor." In: *Expository Times* 109 (1998) 100-103.

[2] See I. Alfeyev: "The Patristic Heritage and Modernity." Paper delivered at the 9th, International Conference on Russian Monasticism and Spirituality. Bose Monastery (Italy), 20th of September 2001, http://orthodoxeurope.org/page/11/1/2.aspx.

[3] See H. U. von Balthasar, *Kosmische Liturgie. Das Weltbild Maximus' des Bekenners*, 2. völlig veränderte Aufl., Einsiedeln 1961, 132-194, 204-273, 274-342.

gian reception: Translation and transportation of St Maximus texts and thinking into another geographical, linguistic and cultural context, that is to say, the Georgian reception. Hereby, I would like to highlight the figure of St Maximus as a link between diverse Christian traditions, between diverse linguistic and cultural spaces. Besides this, the significance of the Georgian "new" reading and understanding, adopting, and interpreting of the Holy Father should be pointed out.[4]

Actualization of St Maximus the Confessor's texts and thinking: Its translation and transportation into another temporal, social, spiritual etc. context, that is to say the contemporary reception of it, i.e., our "new" reading and understanding, adopting and interpreting the text and thinking of the past, emphasizing its actuality for today and its persistent topicality.

Thus, we try to view and analyze the work of St Maximus, his textual and spiritual heritage by means of these two key terms: *Contextualization* and *Actualization.*

1. Contextualization

- Different contexts—phenomenon of reception

Let us go back to our main question, the very title of this article: How to read and understand patristic texts today. How to read and understand them in many different geographical, linguistic, and cultural contexts. How to read and understand St Maximus the Confessor within the diversity of translations of his work, within the context of manifold receptions and adaptations of his thought.

Let us touch very briefly upon the phenomenon of reception in general. What is reception, and what is it based on? Which constitutive elements does it consist of? Which main factors play a decisive role in it?

It should be noted that there are many different receptions in time and space, some of them contemporary to the space and time that the original text derived from, others having distanced themselves in time and space from the same text, thus all of them forming a dynamic circle of readings, re-readings, and interpretations of that which is supposed

[4] See A. Chantladze: "The Place of old Georgian Translations in the Study of Maximus the Confessor's Heritage." In: K. Fledelius (Ed.): *Byzantium. Identity, Image, Influence. XIX International Congress of Byzantine Studies. University of Copenhagen, 18-24 August, 1996.* Abstracts of Communications, Kopenhagen 1996, abstract 7133.

to be an "authentic" text. It is a sort of extension and expansion, a widening and stretching out of the initial, original text, its transformation, its "Umgestaltung," establishing it in a new modus (τρόπος). This is a kind of "migration" of the original text and thought in time and space, its spreading out in the whole cosmos, its continuing "new existence" in many different worlds. "*These readings and readings over in the different ... traditions ... show the deliberate choices, the preferences, and the intellectual level of every culture, that is to say, the degree of penetration into the comprehension.*"[5]

It shows primarily the intensity and quality of the religious and spiritual level of each.

These readings and re-readings in different times and epochs show *the deliberate choices, the preferences, a religious and intellectual level of every epoch* as well.

Reception is based on a deep, intense, and real interconnection, *communication, and reciprocity* of the two different. It should be understood as a process of an adequate inner, internal, and spiritual comprehension, penetration, and adaptation. This deep penetration into the comprehension, into the very heart of it, seems to lead to an adequate adaptation, suggesting a possibility of its interpretation. This way we get many different possibilities of re-readings and interpretations remaining adequate to the original, to that which should be adopted. The elements of this interrelation, the participants of the reception are completely different and far distanced, alien and non-identical, but on the basis of an internal and spiritual comprehension, of a true communication between the two, a harmonic coexistence is achieved. It even makes it possible to identify oneself with that non-identical.[6]

Reception may be understood as determined below:

"Aufnahme des Anderen durch den Anderen in den eigenen Denkhorizont, indem ein drittes Anderes, ...ein überraschend Neues geboren wird."[7]

[5] L. Denkova, P. Yaneva, K. Ivanova: "The Reception of Pseudo-Dionysius in Medieval Bulgaria," In: T. Boiadjev/ G. Kapriev/ A. Speer (Eds.): *Die Dionysius-Rezeption im Mittelalter. Internationales Kolloquim in Sofia vom 8. bis 11. April 1999 unter der Schirmherrschaft der Société Internationale pour l'Étude de la Philosophie Médiévale*, in: Société Internationale pour Philosophie Médiévale, Rencontres de Philosophie Médiévale 9, Sofia 2000, 88-103, 88, 96.

[6] On issues of *reception* see W. Beierwaltes: "Platon und Idealismus." In: *Philosophische Abhandlungen*, Mainz 1972, Bd. 42, 1-2.

[7] Ebd., 2.

It is a process of adopting "another" by "another," creating the third "another," i.e., something "suddenly and unexpectedly new"; it is a transforming and reshaping of that which has been adopted. This adequate transformation and adoption is only possible if some congenial idea, conception, or "Denkform" may be found in the recipient, which corresponds to that which has to be adopted.[8] (Beierwaltes calls it "intentionally identical."[9])

When dealing with the variety of receptions in time and space, a significant question arises as to how this "congeniality" and "intentional identicalness" works in this diversity, unifying them all despite all their differences, distinctions, and non-identicalness.

Referring to the Georgian context of Maximus' reception, it should be discovered what the historical, political, theological, and spiritual premises of his transportation into the Georgian soil, of his "Georgian" transformation, of his reshaping in the "Georgian modus" have been; furthermore, it should be investigated why the translating of St Maximus into Georgian, his wide adoption and adaptation by the Georgians began three or four centuries after his death (tenth to eleventh century) and not earlier, in spite of the fact that the Holy Father was even biographically and personally closely linked with Georgia.

While seeking an appropriate response to our main question, posed in the beginning: *How should one read and understand St Maximus the Confessor within the context of manifold receptions and adaptations of his thought?*—as well as to further important questions following after, I will try to illustrate this point with a concrete example, thus moving on to our next reflection.

1.1. Locating St Maximus within the Georgian context

- Different levels:

I would like to distinguish three levels of reading and analyzing of patristic texts in general:

a. textual (a text level)

b. theological (level of theology, from the viewpoint of a theological reflection, of its theological meaning)

c. cultural (a level of the entire cultural and spiritual history)

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

When dealing with a translation, i.e., with a sort of transportation into another linguistic and cultural context, followed by an adaptation, adoption, and reception, the question arises as to how the translation interrelates with the original. This interrelation is realized through language and thinking, culture and spirituality, through the relation of one language and thinking model with another, of one cultural and spiritual space with another, of the encounter and coincidence of two different linguistic and thinking, cultural, and spiritual worlds at all the three above mentioned levels: text, theology, culture. It is truly a real and inner encounter of two different phenomena (i.e., the original and the translation) as a guarantee of an inevitable creation of the third, i.e., something new.

The Georgian reception of St Maximus, i.e., translation and transportation of his work and thought, language and thinking, culture and spirit into the Georgian context, means a real and inner encounter of the Georgian translators (monks and Holy Fathers) with St Maximus. It is these who indeed succeeded in realizing this interconnection at the textual, theological and cultural levels.[10]

- Some data on St Maximus' Georgian context

Biographical:

According to his vita, St Maximus had been exiled to Lazica, historical western Georgia, and he must have died and been buried here (today the area is called Tsageri-Lechxumi, the region and eparchy of Tsageri and Lentekhi). This fact seems to be attested to by rich ethnographical material from this region. Here the memory of this "holy old man" is still alive with a particular vigour, and a local tradition of venerating St Maximus as one of the "holiest men," one of the greatest saints of the church is strongly preserved (along with two official liturgical feasts of the saint on August 13 and January 21, a non-official, folk feast is celebrated on the first Tuesday after Easter). An oral folk tradition is rich in legends concerning his last days and death at this place.[11]

[10] On this issue see N. Sakvarelidze: "Understanding Some Terms in Maximus the Confessor's Expositio Orationis Dominicae and Its Gelati Translation." In: T. Mgaloblishvili / L. Khoperia (Eds.): *Maximus the Confessor and Georgia*. Iberica Caucasica, London 2009, vol. 3, 59-71.

[11] See T. Mgaloblishvili / L. Khoperia (Eds.): "Maximus the Confessor and Georgia." In: *Iberica Caucasica*, London 2009, vol. 3. Some articles included in this special volume on Maximus and Georgia are dedicated to this topic: E. Kavtaradze: "David Qipshidze and His Research on the Life and Works of Maximus the Confessor," ebd. 151-164; M. Chikovani: "Max-

An ancient monastery, located here, bears the name of St Maximus and is believed to be the place of his burial.[12]

Some significant biographical data may be reconstructed due to rich hagiographical material, preserved in several diverse *vitae* of the Saint.[13]

A Georgian life of St Maximus is known in three distinct recensions:

a. an extended life by Euthymios the Athonite (955-1028)[14]

b. a short synaxarian life by George the Athonite (1009-1065), included in his Great Synaxarion

c. a metaphrasic life of the Hypomnesticum by John Xiphilinos, 11th c., translated by an anonymous author of the twelfth century at Gelati.[15]

A survey on old Georgian translations of Maximus' works along with a vast bibliography is to be found in K. Kekelidze's investigations.[16]

Many different aspects of Maximus' work and thoughts in the Georgian reception have been studied in Georgia and outside, and the

imus the Confessor in Georgian Legends from the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," ebd. 165-200; G. C. Harris: "The Folklorization of Maximus the Confessor," ebd., 201-218; I. Surgaladze: "Maximus the Confessor in Georgian Traditional Culture," ebd., 219-226.

[12] See L. Khoperia: "Maximus the Confessor in Ancient Georgian Sources." In: *StPatr 36* (2001) 134-139, 134. Lela Khoperia has been working for years on Georgian versions of St Maximus life, see L. Khoperia: "Old Georgian Sources Concerning Maximus the Confessor's Life." In: *Le Muséon* 116 (2003) 395-414; and recently L. Khoperia: "Maximus the Confessor: Life and Works in the Georgian Tradition." In: Maximus the Confessor and Georgia, 25-48.

[13] On a manifold tradition of Maximus' Vita see W. Lackner: "Zur Quellen und Datierung der Maximos vita." In: *AnBoll 85* (1967) 285-316; S. Brock: "An Early Syriac Life of Maximus the Confessor." In: *AnBoll 91* (1973) 299-346; R. Devreese: "La Vie de S. Maxime le Confesseur et ses recensions." In: *AnBoll 46* (1928) 5-49; P. Allen: "The Many Lives of Maximus the Confessor : A Methodological Quandary." In: *BSAN (Byzantine Studies in Australia) 24* (1990) 4; B. Roosen: "Maximi Confessoris Vitae et Passiones Graece. The Development of a Hagiographic Dossier." In: *Byz 80* (2010) 408-460.

[14] For Russian translation of the Georgian redaction see in: K. Kekelidze: "Svedenija gruzinskix istočnikov o Maksime Ispovednike," SPB 1912; a Georgian Translation in: K. Kekelidze: *Monumenta Hagiographica Georgica*, Keimena, I., Tb. 1918, 60-103.

[15] See L. Khoperia: "Maximus the Confessor in Ancient Georgian Sources." In: *StPatr 36* (2001) 134-139, 135. Concerning the Hypomnesticon see K. Kekelidze: "Theodosi Gangrelis mosaxseneblis kartuli versia da misi istoriuli mnishvneloba." In: Etjudebi III, Tbilisi 1955, 289-310; K. Kekelidze: "Ioann Ksifilin, prodolzhatel' Simeona Metafrasta." In: *ChrVost (Christianskij Vostok)* I, vyp. III (1912) 325-347; L. Khoperia: "One Georgian Witness and the Literary Heritage of John Xiphilinos." In: *StPatr 45* (2010) 251-256.

[16] K. Kekelidze: "Ucxo avtorebi kart'ul mcerlobashi." In: *Etjudebi V*, Tbilisi 1957, 96-99; K. Kekelidze: *Dzveli kartuli literaturis istoria*, I, Tbilisi 1980, 194-213.

most significant results of this long-term research are presented in the above mentioned volume *Maximus the Confessor and Georgia.* [17] E. Chelidze has been working for years especially in the field of Maximus terminology in Georgian.[18] Père M. van Esbroeck has studied profoundly and edited the Georgian text of *Vita Virginis*.[19]

Cultural and Spiritual:

Maximus the Confessor's role in the entire religious and cultural life of Georgia and his significance in the formation of the Georgian spirituality should be pointed out. It has to be a special topic of research.

- Different Georgian receptions—a twofold reception: a single continual and continuous tradition

We may speak of a twofold Georgian reception of St Maximus, i.e., of two different readings and re-readings, adoptions, and interpretations of St Maximus within the Georgian context:

a. Georgian reading, adopting, and interpreting of St Maximus in the pre-Hellenophilic-Athonite stage (Euthymios Hagiorite, Mount Athos, tenth-eleventh century, Monastery of Iviron, founded 980)

b. Georgian re-reading, re-adopting, and re-interpreting of St Maximus in the Hellenophilic-post-Athonite stage (an anonymous author from Gelati / Western Georgia, twelfth century), [20]) based on

[17] A. Chantladze: "Euthymius the Athonite's Translation of Maximus the Confessor's Quaestiones ad Thalassium." In: *Maximus the Confessor and Georgia*, 49-58; N. Sakvarelidze: "Understanding Some Terms in Maximus the Confessor's Expositio Orationis Dominicae and Its Gelati Translation," ebd., 59-71; T. Othkhmezuri: "Maximus the Confessor's Ambigua ad Iohannem within the Georgian Translation Tradition," ebd., 72-86; M. Rapava: "A Fragment of Maximus the Confessor's Quaestiones ad Thalassium in Old Georgian Manuscripts," ebd., 87-100; D. Melikishvili: "The Principles of Term Formation of the Gelati Theological School and the Gelati Translator of the Works of Maximus the Confessor," ebd. 101-112; L. Aleksidze: "The Georgian Version of the Scholia on Corpus Dionysiacum: Commentaries Known under the Name of 'Maximus'," ebd., 113-131; K. Bezarashvili: "The Interrelation of the Theological Concepts of Divine Love, Beauty and Contemplation in the Writings of Maximus the Confessor and Shota Rustaveli," ebd. 133-150.

[18] E. Chelidze: *Dzveli kartuli saymrtismetqvelo terminologia*, Tbilisi 1994, vol. I.

[19] M. van Esbroeck (Ed.): "Maxime le Confesseur. Vie de la Vierge." In: CSCO. Scriptores Iberici 22, Lovani 1986. Compare ST. J. Shoemaker: *Maximus the Confessor, The Life of the Virgin*, Translated with an Introduction and Notes. Yale University Press 2012.

[20] A famous monastery and academy in Gelati was founded in 1106 by David the Constructor (1073-1125); it was known as "another Athens" and "second Jerusalem." S. Qauchtchishvili (Ed.):

the phenomenon of the Georgian Hellenophilism (a new orientation towards Byzantium)[21]

Different Georgian readings of the Holy Father represent different epochs with a different spirit, different tendencies and accents, different theological traditions with different tasks and aims.

The first type of reading (a), born out of the Athonite tradition, is a sort of shortened, simplified, and compiled revision, free in translating, preserving the main fundamental contents of the original text. In order to produce such a type of translation, one has accordingly to apply adequate translating methods, based on corresponding translating principles: This is the principle of a "dynamic equivalence, referring to the contents," [22] targeting first of all at the content. This seemed to be an appropriate "nutrition"—"milk" and not solid food"—for the "immature" and "infant" Georgians of that time:[23] in order to provide them with simple but fundamental contents of the faith.

"C'xovreba mep'et' mep'isa Davit'isi", in: *Kart'lis Cxovreba I.* Tbilisi 1955. II, Tbilisi 1959, 330-331; see also S. Qauchtchishvili, *Gelati's academia*, Tbilisi 1948.

[21] On the issue of Hellenophilism in general see R. Dostalova, "Tinos to Hellenizein. Controverse aus sujet de legs de l'Antiquité au 4e siècle", *From Late Antiquity to Early Byzantium*, Praha 1985, 179-183; R. Browning: "The Continuity of Hellenism in the Byzantine World: Appearance or Reality?", in: *History, Language and Literacy in the Byzantine World* (Variorum Reprints), Northhampton 1989, p. I, 111-128; L. Brehier: *La civilization byzantine*, Paris 1970; S. Brock, "History of Syriac Translation Technique in Antiquity", in: *Greek-Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 20/1, Springs 1979; S. La Porta: *The Armenian Scholia On Dionysius The Areopagite*, Lovanii 2008; On the Georgian Hellenophilism see D. Melikishvili: "Shavi mt'idan Gelat'amde (Shavi mt'is k'art'uli mtargmnelobit'i skolis dziritadi principebi)", in: Nat'eli K'ristesi. Sak'art'velo. p. I., Tbilisi (2003) 566-569; D. Melikishvili: *Gelat'is saliteraturo skola (XII) da k'art'uli p'ilosop'iuri enis (terminologiis) čamoqalibebis gzebi. Sadis. Našromi.* Tbilisi 1988; D. Melikishvili: "Gelat'is samonastro-literaturuli skola (akademia)", in: *Kut'aisis universitetis Moambe 1* (1993) 6-24; 2, 1993, 5-25; D. Melikishvili: *Dzveli k'art'uli p'ilosop'iur-t'eologiuri terminologiis istoriidan*, Tbilisi 1999; K. Bezarashvili: "Ep'rem Mc'ire, elinopilebi da berdznul-k'art'uli lekstt'cqobis sakit'xebi", in: *Filologiuri dziebani II* (1995) 289-342; K. Bezarashvili, "Elinop'iluri t'argmanis čamoqalibebis gzebi da miznebi", in: A. Baramidze 100, Tbilisi 2002, 45-58, K. Bezarashvili: "Ep'rem Mc'iris mt'argmnelobit'i tendenc'iebisat'vis: dinamikuri ekvivalentis tipis t'argmani elinop'iluri maxasiat'eblebit'", in: *Logosi. Celicdeuli elinologiasa da lat'inistikashi 1.* (2003) 43-83; E. Chelidze: "Ioane Petrici I-II. Ioane Petricis c'xovreba da moγvaceoba", in: *Religia 3-5* (1994) 113-126; *Religia, 1-3* (1995) 76-89; Ders.: *Dzveli k'art'uli saγmrt'ismetqvelo terminologia I.* Tbilisi 1996.

[22] There are two sorts of approaches to the original: a dynamic and a formal equivalence. See E. A. Nida: *Towards a Science of Translating*, Brill, 1964.

[23] Based on the famous metaphor of Hebr 5, 12.13: milk-solid food: "Pavles msgavsad sdzit'a mzrdel čuenisa ciččoebisa"/ „siččoebasa čuenisa nat'esavisa sdzit'a zrdida—sitqua-simokle modzγurisay ganavrc' is litonisa erisat'vis, ramet'u mašin čueni nat'esavi liton iqo da ččvil"/ cod. Jer. Georg. 43, f.3, unedited.

The second type, a new reading of Maximus (b) in the Hellenophilic tradition is an attempt at rendering the original as accurately as possible, without violating its thematic and even formal framework: a precise, accurate, long-version, word-for-word translation, produced by means of an absolute fidelity to the original, not only referring to the content, but a formal equivalence as well, a new structural-formal type of the translated text, concentrating not only on the content, but on the form as well, not only on the whole sentence, but on the word. This became an appropriate, i.e., "solid food" for the "full aged" Georgians. The same truth is delivered in a different new form. At the same time, an accurate and correct translation should not violate the norms characteristic of Georgian and should use the natural possibilities of Georgian to the utmost.[24]

These are the main features of the Hellenophilic re-reading and interpreting the same texts. It is a new comprehension and penetration, new adoption and adaptation of one and the same text.

It should be noted that in spite of these differences in basic attitude, both traditions with their tendencies build up a continual, continuous history of old Georgian spirituality: from the Athonite tradition towards the Hellenophilic, from Mount Athos towards the Black Mountain and Gelati, from free and compiled translations towards exact and accurate ones, from the simple and narrative style towards a scientific, from the dynamic equivalence towards the formal, from the variety and inaccuracy in terminology towards a terminological exactness and regularity, from milk towards solid food, from simple, ignorant faith towards the true gnosis.

1.2. Some examples from the Old Georgian translation of *Expositio Orationis Dominicae*

- Regarding the Georgian context of *Or. Dom.*[25]— some main data

[24] On the differences of the two types of translation, see L. Khoperia: T'avisupal da zust t'argmanta t'aviseburebani ert'i tekstis ori k'art'uli t'argmanis mixedvit'. In: *Mraval'tavi XIX* (2001) 117-138; N. Sakvarelidze: "Understanding Some Terms in Maximus the Confessor's Expositio Orationis Dominicae and Its Gelati Translation". In: *Maximus the Confessor and Georgia*, 59-71.

[25] *Maximis Confessoris Opuscula Exegetica Duo: Expositio in Psalmum. Expositio Orationis Dominicae*, ed. P. van Deun, in: CChrSG 23, Brepols-Turnhout 1991.

The Georgian version of *Expositio Orationis Dominicae* (*Or.Dom.*)[26] derives from the Gelati K 14 collection of the Kutaisi Museum, twelfth century and is present only in this collection.[27] A twelfth-century Greek collection, Coislianus 90, now preserved at the National Library in Paris, should be regarded as one of the main originals ("Vorlage") of the Georgian translation.

It is noteworthy that the Greek manuscript contains Georgian signatures at the margins (the Georgian Asomtavruli for a pagination [f. 9r to 145 r]) and a Georgian inscription on f. 145.[28]

The author of the translations included in the K 14 collection is an anonymous translator from the Gelati theological and philosophical school.[29]

It is also quite evident that the Gelati collection bears the features characteristic of its time and spiritual tendencies of the Hellenophilic epoch, hence differing from the preceding Athonite translations.

- At the level of concrete selected passages of *Or.Dom.*:

This is a very accurate and precise translation in the Hellenophilic spirit, producing, using, and establishing new "Hellenophilic" terms in Georgian, being translated as accurately as possible from Greek. This process leads to creating an authentic Georgian theological terminology, almost adequate to the Greek one. This makes it possible to read and understand St Maximus adequately in Georgian also.

Here are some examples shedding light on the Hellenophilic accuracy and adequacy of the Gelati translation.

[26] On the Georgian translation of *Or. Dom.*,. see N. Sakvarelidze, "Einige Besonderheiten der Deutung der vierten Bitte des Vaterunsergebetes durch Maximos den Bekenner in ihrer altgeorgischen Gelati-Übersetzung (12. Jahrhundert)", In: B. Groen / St. Hawkes-Teeples /St. Alexopoulos (Eds.): *Inquiries into Eastern Christian Worship. Selected Papers of the Second International Congress of the Society of Oriental Liturgy*. Rome, 17-21 September 2008, Leuven–Paris–Walpole 2012 (*Eastern Christian Studies* 12), 209-225, 209-211.

[27] All translations of Gelati collection are attested only in this K 14 manuscript.

[28] See L. Khoperia, "Maximus the Confessor: Life and Works in the Georgian Tradition", In: *Maximus the Confessor and Georgia*, 35.

[29] According to K. Kekelidze, the author must be Nikoloz Gulaberisdze. K. Kekelidze: Ucxo avtorebi kart'ul mcerlobashi. In: *Etujdebi* V, 96; Istoria, 321-322; compare Z. Tcitcinadze: *Kartuli mcerloba me-12 s.*, Tb. 1887, 26-27. Anyway, a profound argumentation is lacking.

Example 1

„ამის საკუნოჲსასა (τοῦτον τὸν αἰῶνα) *ჵჭონებ ცხადყოფასა* (δηλοῦσθαι) *დღესისა მიერ* (διὰ τοῦ σήμερον).“[30] /τοῦτον γὰρ οἶμαι δηλοῦσθαι τὸν αἰῶνα διὰ τοῦ σήμερον...[31]

σήμερον—*today*—*დღეს* is to be understood, according to St Maximus, as this *aion*, this time on the earth. While: "Give us our daily bread today," in this our life on the earth in order to let us overcome the mortality of sin. This is only possible by means of "our daily bread," given to us from the very beginning for making our nature immortal. This bread is a bread of life and gnosis.

„პური ჩუენი, რომელი დასაბამსა საკუდაგებოდ ბუნებისა განჰმზადე[32]*, მომეც ჩუენ დღეს აქასა შინა ცხორებასა მოკუდავად მყოფთა, რაჲთა სძლოს სიკუდილსა ცოდვისასა საზრდელმან პურისა ცხორებისა და მეცნიერებისაჲსამან.“*[33]

The Georgian დღესისა მიერ corresponds to the Greek *διὰ τοῦ σήμερον*.

დღეს is grammatically an adverb, which remains unchangable, i.e., it cannot be declined as a noun. Thereby there is no article in Georgian. But the Hellenophilic translator from Gelati dared to create a new form of the same adverb, while declining it as a noun (here: according to the Greek διὰ τοῦ—*დღეს-ისა [Gen.] მიერ. თუ – ისა*, διὰ – *მიერ*.

This form is unusual for the earlier Georgian translations, for example, the Athonite ones. But the post-Athonite author suggests a new reading and interpretation: By means of the grammatical and formal change of the adverb, thus transforming it, a new meaning of it is achieved, that very meaning that seems to be adequate to its understanding by Maximus: This τὸ σήμερον is not a simple *today*, not a single day, but an extension of it to the whole of this *aion*, this our lifetime on the earth. *Today* becomes identical with all days, pleroma of days as well as with every day (here it should be pointed out that there are two different versions by Matthew [σήμερον, Mt

[30] *მაქსიმე აღმსარებელი*, ლოცვისათჳს მამაო ჩუენოჲსა, K 14, 161v.

[31] *Or. Dom.*, CChrSG 23, 59, c. 562-563.

[32] ἐπ' ἀθανασίᾳ τῆς φύσεως ἠτοίμασας, *Or. Dom.*, *CChr* SG 23, c. 565, 60 /„ad immortalitatem naturae praestandam parasti“, *Or. Dom.*, PG 90, 898B.

[33] *მაქსიმე აღმსარებელი*, ლოცვისათჳს მამაო ჩუენოჲსა, K 14, 161v /*Or. Dom.*, CChr SG 23, 59-60, c. 564-568.

6:11] and Luke [καθ' ἡμέραν, Lk 11:3] in Pater Noster, but if *today* is nothing else as *all days* it means consequently *every day* as well). The article τὸ added to the adverb σήμερον seems to underline the significance of this *today*: by means of this *today* this whole *aion* (τοῦτον τὸν αἰῶνα) is being manifested.

The Georgian verb *ცხადყოფა-სა* (infinitive verb in dat., a compound verb consisting of an adjective *ცხად - evident* and infinitive verb *ყოფა - to be, to let be, to make*) renders adequately the Greek verb δηλοῦσθαι—this is a regular Georgian equivalent, referring to the content as well as to the form of the Greek term.

Example 2

„საჟამოსა ამას შინა (κατὰ τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦτον), *რომლისა წარმომახსენებელ ყოფად* (σύμβολον εἶναι) *ვთქუთ დღესა*" (τὸ σήμερον).[34] /... κατὰ τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦτον, οὗ σύμβολον εἶναι τὸ σήμερον ἔφαμεν.[35]

This aion, the symbol of which is to be said today...

τὸ σήμερον—*დღეს-ი* (Nom.).

σύμβολον εἶναι— *წარმომახსენებელ ყოფად.*

ყოფად (an infinitive verb in casus adverbialis for expressing a purpose)—corresponds to εἶναι.

The Hellenophilic translator from Gelati offers a very accurate and interesting equivalent to the Greek σύμβολον)— *წარმომახსენებელ* (a participle in root casus, derived from a compound verb *წარმო-ჩენა*, corresponding to the Greek verb ἐκ-φαίνομαι—*to appear, to manifest, to reveal*). *σύμβολον* as *წარმომახსენებელ* should be understood as something that manifests, something that reveals. *Today* is a symbol of this whole *aion*, i.e., that is *today* that reveals and manifests this *aion*. The translator does not go back to a wide range of Georgian equivalents to the Greek σύμβολον,[36] but rather prefers to interpret it as something that manifests. This meaning of σύμβολον seems to stand close to the above mentioned δηλοῦσθαι as well, thus linking these two passages with one another also in this way.

[34] *მაქსიმე აღმსარებელი*, ლოცვისათჳს მამაო ჩუენოჲსა, K 14, 164r.

[35] *Or.Dom.*: CChrSG 23, 63, c. 635-636.

[36] The Georgian terminology offers a wide range of equivalents to the Greek *σύμβολον*, such as *saxe* (image, likeness, form, typos), *igavi* (parabel, παραβολή), *nišani /niši / moscaveba* (sign), *sascauli* (wonder), *šetqueba* (bring together, συμ-βάλλειν), *saidumloy* (mystery, mysterion).

2. Actualization

What is to be the appropriate, adequate, scientifically accurate, and modern approach to these "old" texts? How should we translate them into our modern, plain, and understandable language? How should we interpret them today?

Actualization of the old patristic texts, in this case, those of Maximus, means its readings and re-readings in our days, today and consequently all days, in the plenty of days, while an accurate reading and reading over deepens and widens the comprehension of the original text, makes it actual for every day and every moment. Re-readings of the old texts make it new (they re-new it), suggesting plenty of possibilities of its new comprehension and adoption.

We all are called to this regular, consequent reading and comprehending, penetrating into the depth of the old texts, seeking new questions and their possible solutions, often even unsolvable questions, interpreting and debating, thinking and reflecting. In order to understand better we have to read intensively and to reflect intensively. In the case of Maximus' Georgian context, there is first the problem of the necessity for publishing all the translated sources in order to make them accessible for wider circles, not only for the specialists and scholars. The *scholia* and commentaries, that the Georgian Maximus translations are often supplied with (especially those of the Hellenophilic tradition) should be investigated separately, providing a useful help for a better comprehension of the original text. It would be useful to translate some most significant works of Maximus from old Georgian into modern Georgian in order to make these old writings available for public access. But here we would face again the problem of lacking an appropriate modern language with adequate, and at the same time, understandable modern theological terminology. Even this problem may be solved gradually if we try hard and make efforts to read, re-read, and interpret intensively.

V

Cosmic Dimension

Where and *When* as Metaphysical Prerequisites for Creation in *Ambiguum* 10

Pascal Mueller-Jourdan

What I would like to present here is not a complete and definitive theory about the metaphysical status of the creation in the Maximus the Confessor's system, but a sort of *status quaestionnis* from my own research on Maximus' concepts of physics, mainly in the *Ambiguum* 10. I will particularly focus my contribution upon the question of space-or-place and time as a *sine qua non* of the being of beings of all the creatures.

As everyone knows, Maximus establishes a radical gap between the uncreated God and all the creatures. But such a radical gap is transcended by the divine actions or *energeiai* which structure and maintain in its own right the nature of the created being.

As everyone knows also, Maximus transforms the Origenist triad which explains the present status of corruption of sensible things by the sequence of three notions: stasis / kinesis / becoming (i.e., generation), in another triad : becoming or generation / kinesis /stasis. By this, Maximus points out a very important aspect of his concept of creation. All created realities, sensible and intelligible, are generated, insofar as they have a principle. And having a principle of their own generation, all creatures are in movement. In the case of Maximus' system, the movement is specific to creatures and, as a result, it has to be considered as universal for both sensible and intelligible beings, even if I have to admit that movement for intelligible as stable forms of creation is a paradox.

Given these premises, we can explore the way in which Maximus inherits and transforms some of the physical concepts in use by Greek commentators on Aristotle.

I suggest that we also accept—along with late antique physicists—that the Aristotelian categories of substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, posture, state, action, and passion are not only a mode of descriptive analysis and a mode of classification of all sensible phenomena of nature[1] but ontological determinations inherent in all realities.

The *Ambiguum* 10 is a series of small treatises focusing on the ontological status of created being. In this document, the main preoccupation of Maximus seems to be to argue that the being of beings, that is to say, the being of all created things, is a radically different level of reality than the being of the Divine. About God, Maximus clearly adds: "... being is derived from him but He is not being. For He is beyond being itself, and beyond anything that is said or conceived of him, whether simply or in a certain way."[2] In contrast to the Divine, the created being is subject to categorial determinations, which Aristotle called *logoi*. Is it possible to suggest that the concept of *logos/logoi*, central to the Maximian system, depends on Aristotle's views? We have to answer both: yes and no. Yes, because the *logoi* express the "*ordo rerum*" visible in the sensible world, that is to say, all the aspects which we have to take into account in an analysis of the sensible, visible, tangible, and contingent world. No, because, first of all, for late antique physicists as well as for Maximus, the *logoi* express the thoughts of the Divine, pre-existing in a *Logos-One*. Such a conception is too Platonic to be attributed to Aristotle. Indeed, for Aristotle, the categories are general determinations only of sensible things, and they are not elevated at the level of the intelligible as we shall see for Iamblichus, one of the most inspired commentators of Aristotle's categories.

For Maximus, God contains in Him all of creation in a pre-existing logical structure. Let's say simply that this pre-existing structure is unified at its higher level of reality in a Logos-one as Maximus said in *Ambiguum* 7.[3]

[1] "Each uncombined word or expression means one of the following things: what (or Substance), how large (that is, Quantity), what sort of thing (that is, Quality), related to what (or Relation), where (that is, Place), when (or Time), in what attitude (Posture, Position), how circumstanced (State or Condition), how active, what doing (or Action), how passive, what suffering (Affection) [Τῶν κατὰ μηδεμίαν συμπλοκὴν λεγομένων ἕκαστον ἤτοι οὐσίαν σημαίνει ἢ ποσὸν ἢ ποιὸν ἢ πρός τι ἢ ποὺ ἢ ποτὲ ἢ κεῖσθαι ἢ ἔχειν ἢ ποιεῖν ἢ πάσχειν]," in : Aristotle, *Categories* [1b25-27], H.P.Cooke transl., London, Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 2002 (reprinted).

[2] Maximus the Confessor, *Amb.* 10, PG 91, 1180d, A.Louth trans.

[3] Cf., *Amb.* 7, PG 91, 1081bc.

Let us see now about the topic proposed for my contribution: the categories of place-space and time, more precisely, the interrogative categories of Where and When [*pou/pote*] as prerequisites for Creation.

In *Ambiguum* 10, Maximus asserts that the categories of Where and When mean for the being of each created being that they are necessarily located in a place, and necessarily and—in a concomitant way—in a certain time. But Maximus who accepts this Aristotelian theory will do as the late antique physicists have done. Indeed, Maximus explicitly agrees that place and time—which are accidental categories for Aristotle—clearly become metaphysical prerequisite even for the all-powerful category of substance (*ousia*) as we can read it:

> If none of the beings is free from circumscription, all the beings clearly receive in proportion to themselves both the being-*when* and the being-*where* [πάντα τὰ ὄντα δηλονότι ἀναλόγως ἑαυτοῖς καὶ τὸ ποτέ εἶναι καὶ τὸ ποῦ εἶναι εἴληφε]. Apart from these [categories], nothing at all can be [Τούτων γὰρ ἄνευ τὸ παράπαν οὐδέν εἶναι δυνήσεται], neither substance, nor quantity, nor quality, nor relation, nor action, nor passion, nor movement, nor habit, nor any other of those attributes with which those who know about these things delimit the universe.[4]

As I have been able to verify from my own research, such a status conferred on "being-when" and "being-where" is extremely rare in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Up to now, I have found only one explicit and clear example before Maximus in this tradition, in the commentary of Philo of Alexandria on the *Decalogue*. According to Philo, such a thesis is admitted by the philosophy of the Hellenistic period. Philo asserts: "For those who have devoted themselves to the doctrines of philosophy say that what are called the categories in nature are ten only in number—quality, substance, quantity, relation, action, passion, possession, condition, and those two without which nothing can exist, time and place. [τὰ ὧν οὐκ ἄνευ <πάντα>, χρόνον καὶ τόπον]."[5] Another instance of spatio-temporality as a physical prerequisite can be found in an anonymous treatise contemporary with Maximus' works, a trea-

[4] *Amb.* 10, PG 91, 1181b, A.Louth trans. with some corrections.

[5] Philo of Alexandria, *De decalogo* [30], *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt*, vol. 4, L.Cohn ed., Berlin, Reimer, 1902 (Repr. 1962).

tise called *Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy*;[6] but in this case, there is no explicit statement that place and time are a *sine qua non* for all the other categories, nor that they are articulated with them.

For Maximus, being-where includes several characteristics, such as having a spatial limit in a three dimensional extension and having a position. Having a position has to be understood in various senses, exactly as becoming at the right time in a given order. In fact, being-when also includes several essential characteristics such as having ordered movement and a principle, or a beginning. This theory concludes the section of the *Ambiguum* 10 called "Proof that everything apart from God exists in a place." Maximus asserts: "But if beings possess being in a certain way, and not simply, we will demonstrate it is so by the 'being-where' because of the position and the limit of the *logoi* in accordance with their own nature [ὑπό τοῦ ποῦ εἶναι διά τήν θέσιν καί τό πέρας τῶν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς κατά φύσιν λόγων], and it is totally so by the 'being-when' because of the principle [ὑπό τό ποτέ πάντως εἶναι διά τήν ἀρχήν]."[7]

But Maximus is not explicit about what "position" exactly means here. He is no more explicit about what "principle" means in this particular context. In the case of the meaning of *archè,* Maximus seems to circumscribe the modality of the When in arguing that the being of beings are rooted in a principle and/or a beginning unlike to the Divine which alone is without principle (*anarchôs*).

Usually, in the physics of late antiquity, the concept of position is related to the configuration of different parts in a given whole, as well as the order, rank or *taxis* is related to the different stages of the development of a being. The doctrine is well attested by late antique experts on physics as we can see in the *Corollarium de loco* of Simplicius:

> Thus it is very clear that place is concerned with position and with things having a posture. For we say that those things are in a place which we also say are in a position; and above and below are differences of place, viewed in relation to position, just as are right and left and in front and behind. That place marks off, measures, and orders position can be learnt as follows: we say that each thing has a posture, however disordered this may be, but a thing is said to be properly

[6] See: *Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy* [16.10-17], L.G.Westerink ed., Amsterdam, North-Holland Publishing Co, 1962.

[7] *Amb.* 10, PG, 91, 1180d-1181a.

> positioned when it gains its proper place, just as a thing comes to be whenever it reaches being, but is opportune when it comes at the right time. So, because place properly positions each part, the head is at the top of my body and my feet are at the bottom, and my liver is to the right and my heart central. Also the eyes, through which we see as we advance, are in front, but the shoulders with which we carry burdens are behind. These differences are because of place, just as because of time the parts of the embryo are framed one after the other, and one age precedes another in proper order.[8]

So to sum up the traditional doctrine of physics that, I propose, Maximus followed, being-where means having a certain position, according its own nature, and it also means having a spatial limit. Being-when means essentially having a principle of its own being, consequently, being generated, being in movement, and having a beginning of its own movement; more clearly, being-when means having a temporal limit and so having a certain duration, in essence not being eternal. But, being-when means also knowing a certain order in its own movement, according to the natural development of its own nature. But in the quotation of *Corollarium de loco* of Simplicius, we can observe that place as well as time are not only passive reference to the well positioned things and to the well ordered sequence of a natural movement but the cause of such a position and such an order.

For Maximus, the issue is clear: space and time are physical prerequisites of all beings affected by the process of generation and corruption. This is an obvious characteristic of the contingent world. That which is generated begins in time (and/or with time),[9] and "what begins in time," as Sheldon-Williams said nearly fifty years ago, "must begin somewhere; therefore, place and time are [simultaneously] the *sine qua non* (ὧν ἄνευ) of contingent being."[10]

[8] Simplicius, *In Aristotelis physicorum libros octo commentaria* [InAristPhys 625.34-626.14], H. Diels ed., Berlin, CAG 9, 1882. English translation: Simplicius, *Corollaries on Place and Time* J.O.Urmson transl., London, Duckworth, 1992.

[9] Cf., *Amb.* 10, PG 91, 1164a-1165a, 1176d-1177b. See: P.Mueller-Jourdan, "La nature des êtres et le temps. Une lecture byzantine de Timée 38b", *PLATO. Journal of the International Plato Society* 6 (2005), online : http://www.nd.edu/ plato/plato6issue/Mueller-Jourdan_1.pdf.

[10] I.P. Sheldon-Williams, "The Greek Christian Tradition from the Cappadocians to Maximus and Eriugena," in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, A.H. Armstrong ed., Cambridge, 1967, p. 500.

From a phenomenological point of view, it is simple to say that place and time are required as essential physical prerequisites for contingent beings. This was the position in Aristotle's Physics. But, in the context of Neoplatonic readings of Aristotle's Physics, things are quite different because reality is no more only sensible but clearly also incorporeal and intelligible. And it is easy to see that, for some of Aristotle's most important commentators in late antiquity, the intelligible realm also requires the categories of place and time. Thus the categories of Where and When are not only considered in the three-dimensional extension of physical objects, but they have to be considered also as expressing the metaphysical position and the unextended order of the transcendent Forms in their proper domain.[11]

But before I analyze some aspects of such a promotion of Place and Time in the intelligible realm, I would like to say that it is clear that, for Maximus, the intelligible realm—and all that is contained in it—is not radically separated from the sensible because both issue from and are determined by the unique *logos* of Creation.[12]

For Maximus, "intelligible" could mean essentially two things. First of all, it could mean the transcendent, universal, stable but generated Forms of the Universe. But "intelligible" could also mean the domain of non-corporeal beings and spiritual entities like angels and all the angelic hierarchy. In any case, for Maximus, the "intelligible," having a principle/beginning, has to be considered as generated. This is a major difference between Maximus and the Neoplatonists.

[11] See: Sambursky and Pines in their study entitled *The Concept of time in Late Neoplatonism*. They say about the intellectual time: "The earlier and the later of intellectual time is not in motion. Its points, arranged in an order of earlier or later, do not possess the property of flux, which makes the future pass into the present and the present into the past, but it is, as it were, a static earlier or later, which, moreover, cannot be represented by spatial extension," in: S. Sambursky & S.Pines, *The Concept of Time in Late Neoplatonism*, Jerusalem, The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1971, p.16. For Neoplatonic physicists, it exists a kind of stable reality of time as we can see in the *Corollarium de tempore* of Simplicius reporting a section of the lost commentary of Iamblichus upon the *Timaeus* of Plato: "The paradigm exists through all eternity, but the universe has come to be through all time without end, so that it is both present and future. What exists as a pattern in the intelligible exists as an image in what which is generated. What is there eternal is here temporal; and that which is in the intelligible is in being now and present, that in this world in continuity comes into being without end. The unchangingly self-subsistent appears in these regions as past, present and future. What there is undivided is here seen as divided. And now the intermediate dual nature of time has become clear; it is intermediate between eternity and the heavens, and it is dual insofar as it exists together with and in relation to the universe, but it is ordered in relation to eternity; it is set over the one, and is a likeness of the other. Such is the clear meaning of the relevant passages of the Timaeus, according to the divine Iamblichus.", in: Simplicius, *Corollarium de tempore* [794.28-795.3], *In Aristotelis physicorum libros octo commentaria*, H. Diels ed., quoted from : Simplicius, *Corollaries on Place and Time*, J.O.Urmson trans. (with minor corrections), London, Duckworth, 1992.

[12] See for instance: *Myst.* 2 [241-248], Ch.Boudignon ed., Turnhout, Brepols, CCSG 69, 2011 ; *Amb.* 41, PG 91, 1304d-1312d.

However, it is not always clear which meaning of "intelligible" is intended in Maximus' works. It depends on the context. For my purposes, I have mainly chosen here the first meaning of "intelligible," that is to say, the transcendental and stable Forms of the Universe. But my choice is not exclusive.

If time (*chronos*) expresses a measure of movement in the sensible dimension of a unique cosmos, perpetuity (*aiôn*) expresses the duration and continuity of the intelligible dimension of that unique cosmos. But both the sensible dimension and the intelligible dimension of the unique created world are related to the category of When, as Maximus says in his first *Century of Theology and Economy of the Incarnation*:

> Beginning, middle, and end are characteristics of beings distinguished by time and it can be truly stated that they are also characteristics of beings comprehended in "perpetuity." Indeed time, which has measured movement, is circumscribed by number, and "perpetuity," which includes in its existence the category of When, suffers dimensional extension insofar as it began to be[13] [ὁ αἰὼν δὲ συνεπινοουμένην ἔχων τῇ ὑπάρξει τὴν πότε κατηγορίαν, πάσχει διάστασιν, ὡς ἀρχὴν τοῦ εἶναι λαβών]. And if time and "perpetuity" are not without principle/beginning, so much are those things which are contained in them.[14]

Thus, for Maximus, the category of When is a universal category determining both intelligible and sensible created realities because of the universality of movement;[15] when there is movement, it is possible

[13] Other translation: "insofar as it is rooted in the principle of being."

[14] Maximus the Confessor, *Cap. theol.* I.5, PG 90, 1085a, trans. G.C. Berthold with minor corrections.

[15] "For every kind of being is moved, except the sole cause which is unmoved and transcends all things [Πάντα γὰρ κινεῖται τὰ ὁπωσοῦν ὄντα, δίχα τῆς μόνης καὶ ἀκινήτου καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντα αἰτίας]", in: *Amb.* 10, PG 91, 1177a ; "If the movement of things that have come into being is of intellectual things, it is intellectual movement, and if it is of sensible things, it is sensible movement [Τῶν γὰρ γενομένων ἡ κίνησις, ἤτε νοητῶν, νοητή, ἤ τε αἰσθητῶν, αἰσθητή.]. As is apparent to those who have examined these things carefully, no creature is by nature unmoved,

to measure the movement; if it is possible to measure movement, there is time, because time is the measure of movement either circular, sequential, or mixed. And such an assertion is perfectly understandable if we agree with the Maximian theory of the concomitance of the universal Nature of all created beings, both sensible and intelligible, with time; and if we remember that, for Maximus, the *logoi* of time abide in God.[16] From the concomitance of Where and When, consequently concomitance of place and time, concomitance of position and principle plus order, asserted by both Maximus and the physicists of late antiquity, I can add, I think legitimately, that the category of Where has to be considered as universal as the category of When: indeed, being in a "time" includes necessarily being in a "place" and consequently to be ordered and positioned according to the general and divine *ordo rerum*. From which it follows that the *logoi* of place and/or space, as well as the *logoi* of time, are in God as a spatiotemporal predetermination for all creation which have to come into being. If the *logoi* of time and the *logoi* of place abide in God, they are present as divine thoughts in God prior to creation. I think I can also assert that, after creation, When and Where are active as a special form of Divine providence that ensures, as Maximus alleges, the permanence, the position, the order of all created reality:

> So, too, when they see the permanence, the *order* and *position* what has come to be, and its manner of being [i.e., of the process of adjusting], in accordance with which each being, according to its proper form, is preserved unconfused and without any disorder [οὕτω δὲ τὴν διαμονήν, τήν τε τάξιν καὶ τὴν θέσιν τῶν γεγονότων, καὶ τὴν διεξαγωγήν, καθ' ἣν πάντα κατὰ τὸ οἰκεῖον ἕκαστα εἶδος ἔστηκεν ἀσύγχυτα καὶ παντὸς ἐλεύθερα φυρμοῦ]; and the course of the stars proceeding in the same way, with no alteration of any kind, and the circle of the years proceeding in an orderly manner according to the periodic return of the [heavenly bodies] from and to their own place [ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν τόπον], and the equal yearly proportion of nights and days, with their mutual increase and decrease, taking place according to a measure that is neither too small nor too great, they understand that behind everything there is providence, and this they acknowledge as God, the fashioner of all.[17]

In this way, we can admit with Maximus as with Aristotle's Neoplatonic commentators that "place" is not only a physical phenomenon but also an active entity, one aspect of the divine energy operating in the Universe which gives well-position and natural limit to all created realities. And we can admit that "time," considered in the general category of When is not only a physical phenomenon, but an active entity, one aspect of the divine energy operating in the Universe and giving to all creatures well-ordered development and a becoming at the right time in the right place.

Such a doctrine, which definitely surpasses the limits of physics, comes from the radical transformation of a too literal and limited use of Aristotelian categories in the sole domain of the sensible world. Physicists of late antiquity (inheriting the Platonic readings of Aristotle's categories made by Iamblichus) as well as Maximus' use of those same categories tried to apply them to the transcendent and divine realities, to the divine economy. Such a metaphysical promotion of these two small and accidental categories is noticeable in Greek theology both pagan and Christian.

Let us conclude. "Where" and "When" are not only a way to describe one of the major characteristics of concrete beings. They are not only accidental, not only contingent categories, but also mother categories because even the powerful category of substance depends on them for its own existence.

Furthermore, "space" and "time," in the Maximian system, seem to express—in an impressive way—the intramundane action of God, what is called Providence. The action of God—which includes the doctrine of the divine energies—marks off, measures and arranges reciprocally all parts of all the wholes; the action of God gives a well-order to the sequences of all movement which affects all created entity.

not even those that are inanimate and perceptible by the senses. All movement is either linear, circular or spiral, that is it is either simple [linear] or complex [circular or spiral]. If, then, coming into being is understood to precede movement, movement is subsequent to coming into being", in : *Amb.* 7, PG 91, 1072ab. See also : Aristotle, *Physique* IV [261b.28], H. Carteron ed. ; Simplicius, *In Aristotelis physicorum libros octo commentaria* [602.22-23 & 603.7-8], H. Diels ed. ; *In Aristotelis de Caelo commentaria* [132. 24-26], J.L. Heiberg ed.

[16] Cf., *Amb.* 10, PG 91, 1164ab.

[17] *Amb.* 10, PG 91, 1176bc; make a comparison with the section of *Ambiguum* 10 called "Contemplation of divine providence", in: *Amb.* 10, PG 91, 1188d-1189a.

However, there remains an open question. What about those categories, as the expression of an active power or energy organizing and ordering created realities in regard to divinization, particularly at the end of time? If these categories are *logoi* abiding in God, they cannot disappear. We have to admit that the present spatio-temporality characterized by the changing will be surpassed. The Resurrection of Christ attests such a surpassing of the current physical limits.

I would like to suggest that the transfiguration of current spatio-temporality will be at the end of time, the ever-moving rest around the desirable as we can read in *Ad Thalassium* 59:

> "Repletion of desire is the ever-moving rest around the desirable of the ones who desire [ἐφέσεως δὲ πλήρωσίς ἐστιν ἡ περὶ τὸ ἐφετὸν τῶν ἐφιεμένων ἀεικίνητος στάσις] / ever-moving rest is the continuous and never-ending enjoyment of the desirable [ἀεικίνητος δὲ στάσις ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ ἐφετοῦ διηνεκής τε καὶ ἀδιάστατος ἀπόλαυσις]."[18]

As we can see, at the end of current time, there will remain a kind of spatiality, because of the position of transfigured beings dancing around God, and a sort of temporality, because of the never-ending movement around the divinity. But this eschatological "space" and "time" is issued from the divinization, which confers incorruptibility and definitive stability on all reality. This radically new and definitive state of being is called by Maximus an "ever-well-being."

[18] *QThal.* 59.130-133, C. Laga-C.Steel eds.

The Cosmos of the World and the Cosmos of the Church: St Maximus the Confessor, Modern Cosmology, and the Sense of the Universe

Alexei V. Nesteruk

Introduction

St Maximus the Confessor lived his human life fourteen hundred years ago. Being a monk and, as it is thought nowadays, one of the greatest thinkers of the Christian East, he lived in a cultural and social environment considerably different from what we have today. Having been imbued with the Greek philosophy originating from pre-Christian times, he (as well as the Church Fathers before him) must have inherited the picture of the physical world based in the Aristotelean philosophy and Ptolemy's (second century BC) astronomy in which the cosmos was presented by a system of the heavenly spheres, bearing the moon, five planets, and the sun, rotating around their geometrical and ontological, immovable center with the earth. The cosmos was finite and concluded by the sphere of immovable stars, a boundary of the universe, beyond which was a mysterious nowhere. We cannot say with certainty how much of this ancient astronomy was known to Maximus. He probably was not concerned too much with knowledge of the world *per se*, for this knowledge, according to him, originated in the senses related to the soul, that is to the faculty inferior in comparison with the intellect (*nous*) which deals with "true" knowledge of the world, the contemplation of its underlying and forming principles (*logoi*) referring to God as the Creator of this world. In this sense, the cosmos did not have the same importance for Maximus as for the pagan philosophers. Correspond-

ingly when one invokes the term "cosmology," "cosmos," "cosmic vision," "cosmic liturgy," "Christocentric cosmology," etc., reflecting in the context of Maximus' writings that often claimed "cosmic dimension" of Greek Patristic or Orthodox theology, these cosmic connotations are not that which were meant by the ancient Greek philosophers and certainly not by modern physical cosmology. One could suggest, hypothetically, that Maximus could have been interested in reconciling the ancient Greek cosmology with that of the Genesis of the Bible which does not have any indication of a spherically structured universe with the center at the spherical Earth. However, we cannot find any direct references to this in the writings of Maximus; unlike his predecessors Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus did not produce his own explicit "Hexameron"; it is in a strictly philosophical interest to the created world, that Maximus, unlike Basil, did not attempt to reconcile the perfectness of the spherical movements of the heavenly entities (as taught in Greek philosophy and astronomy) with the Biblical teaching of their origination in the finite past. One can add to this that the perception of the finitude of the spatial dimensions of the natural world following from Ptolemaic cosmology must have been complemented by the perception of the finitude in duration of the world that followed from Biblical teaching. Maximus probably thought of the universe as being a few thousands years old since the time it was created. However, this cosmographic, or, so to speak, natural finitude was inherent in Maximus' thought not only because of astronomical ideas and Biblical tradition; for Maximus as a philosopher, space and time were finite first of all on the grounds of their epistemological understanding as expressions of finitude and limitations in general. For example, temporality is a characteristic of the finite creation related to all things: "...everything is certainly in time, since everything that possesses existence after God possesses this existence in a certain way and not simply. And therefore they are not without beginning. For if we know how something is, we may know that it is, but not that it [always] was." In other words, the universe cannot be infinite in time and space because it was created out of nothing, so that its hypothetical infinitude would contradict its created nature. In this sense the notions of infinite space and endless time are contradictory as being a mixture of that which is supposed be uncreated (the infinite) and created (which is always given in rubrics of limited spatial-

ity and limited movement [temporality]). Time and space (place) in Maximus exist simultaneously and cannot exist without each other: there is a common source of their contingent facticity in their otherness. Contemporary cosmology would agree on the interlink between space and time based in general relativity; however, space and time in physics are relational upon created matter whereas in Maximus this relationality is linked to the conditions of creation in general between the ultimate causation of the world and its final consummation. In this sense, space and time are not only forms of the world's finitude, but also the conditions of the Divine presence in the world.

Modern cosmology would be in a partial agreement with what concerns the finite past of the universe, whereas the same cosmology asserts the indefinite accelerating expansion of the universe in the future. In terms of space it is understood that the visible part of the universe is limited because of the conditions of observation, but not because of any philosophical assumption. Whether or not the universe is spatially infinite beyond the light cone of the past (visible universe), it remains a theoretical conviction. In spite of this conviction, which effectively allows for the universe to be potentially geometrically infinite, the point of view of Maximus can be valid if we restrict ourselves to the epistemological finitude which follows from the creaturely nature of the universe.

From what we have said so far it does not follow that Maximus' thought is irrelevant and cannot be engaged with modern cosmology: on the contrary the term "cosmology," which is often used in the scholarly studies of Maximus, simply must be carefully elucidated. Cosmology in Maximus is by definition related to the created world as a whole and its generic ontological structure, or to the "act" of creation of the world out of nothing in which the wholeness of the world is represented in an encapsulated form. Cosmology is related to the constitution of the created world, for example, as the distinction and difference (*diaphora*) between the visible and invisible (sensible and intelligible). Cosmology in Maximus is realistic in the sense that Maximus does not enquire into the conditions of the constitution of the world. From a modern philosophical point of view, this cosmology is based on the presumption *of faith* in those realities which are posed as ontological ones. The access to the universe is guaranteed by the acceptance of the fact of life as that saturated givenness (of the Divine image) which can-

not be denied. In other words, a realistic stance in anthropology connotes with a realistic stance in cosmology: anthropology mimics the same basic differences in creation and legitimizes, on the grounds of the analogy, the process of knowledge and understanding of the universe. It is through theological anthropology that the properly Christian dimensions enter cosmological considerations and, vice versa, Christian teaching receives its cosmological sense. However, all these aspects of the so called "theological cosmology" can be related to cosmology understood as the science of the physical universe only to a very limited extent. Then it becomes clear that the issue of discussing the legacy of Maximus the Confessor in the context of modern cosmology presupposes a different level of enquiry, which brings both Maximus' teaching and the modern view of the universe to the common "denominator," humanity itself, understood not only through its cosmically insignificant position portrayed by contemporary cosmology, but through its central place in being, that is as a center of disclosure and manifestation of the universe originating in its Divine image.

For hard line scientific cosmologists, any parallelism between physical cosmology and the Patristic vision of the universe would seem to be a sheer nonsense. One could expect a sceptical or even nihilistic question: what is the purpose of extending the legacy of Maximus the Confessor through the ages, in particular in relation to modern science, if his perception of physical reality of the universe was crucially different in comparison with that of modern cosmology? Correspondingly, if one involves modern scientific discourse in debates with ecclesial theology, subjecting the discourse to a theological critique, this may distort the sense of science and make the whole debate have no justification and value. A possible response to this question is that studying and thinking of Maximus in the twenty-first century is not so much studying facts and models of physical reality (it was not an objective of the Saint). It is rather studying and learning his ways of thought. As was asserted by Fr. G. Florovsky, to study the Fathers of the Church is, first of all, to "acquire their mind" to learn how to think of the world through the eyes of faith in God in order to discover this world as being rooted in God. In other words, it is to learn how to see the reality of the world in its intimate link to its creator, to approach life in the universe in its God-given integrity and communion and to see the presence of that "reality" which is the

ultimate source of the very possibility of the universe, to make it palpable and having sense in every aspect of the human wonder of the world, every scientifically articulated fact. In this sense, the cosmic vision of Maximus the Confessor is interesting not in terms of its physical aspects, but in terms of its impact on the understanding of divine humanity and its central role in disclosure and manifestation of the universe. Maximus' vision of the universe teaches us how to withstand the attacks of the exterior sense impressions and the lure of the aesthetic artifacts of scientific theories in order to preserve our human dignity, to preserve humanity at all costs and not be swallowed by the immensities of the "beautiful universe," or, as it was said by G. Marcel in the middle of the twentieth century, not to be crushed under the weight of astronomical facts.

Contemporary scientific vision of reality condemns humanity to physical slavery, its consubstantiality to the tiny portion of the material stuff in the universe. In this sense, physics is immanent and monistic: it chains us to the world and its necessities which follow from physical laws. It disregards (as being unable to deal with) those dimensions of personal existence which deviate from the phenomenality of objects. The value of Maximus' thought comes from the exactly opposite move: he teaches us how to *transcend* this phenomenality. When we say "transcend" it does not mean that we pass over the universe, leave it behind, and aspire to God, the transcendent. "To transcend" in this case means to preserve our difference from within the universe, to retain personhood and our divine image even in those conditions, when science positions us in the universe as "virtually non-existent, dust." "To transcend" means to be able, while studying the universe, to develop deeply the "inner kingdom," the immensities of the human heart, which, being conditioned by the necessities of embodiment in the universe, still retain the faculty of communion with the source and giver of life. In this sense, the cosmic vision of Maximus the Confessor is never dated or outdated, because it teaches us how to increase our faith in God through studying the universe and then transcending it. This latter thought corresponds to a phenomenological attitude to cosmology, namely that cosmology speaks not only about outer physical realities. Its theories attest to the structures of human subjectivity, that is to the structures of disclosure and manifestation which reflect the search of humanity for the sense of its own existence. It is through this search

that cosmology advances the sense of personhood as a radically different state of being, different from all non-hypostatic entities which cosmology predicates. It is through this ever unfolded sense of personhood that the reality of the Divine Personhood manifests itself with an ever unceasing force.

Before we proceed to the heart of this paper we must elucidate a theological issue related to the so called "garments of skin," that is to the human condition after the Biblically understood Fall. One must be clear from the beginning that all aspects of human activity, including exploring and learning of the universe, are related to the postlapsarian condition. Correspondingly, our sense of reality of the universe and our place in it is affected by that obscurity which had been imposed after the Fall on the initial human faculties (made in the image of God). According to the teaching of the Church, before the Fall it was the unity between man and the universe through which the universe was to follow man to its "end," analytically described by Maximus in *Ambigua* 41 as the overcoming of divisions (*diairesis*) in creation. Man's transgression set nature off course, making it develop in enclosure with itself, isolated and blind, devoid of any *telos* and doomed to futility. Matter was deprived of its development towards the spirit; it stopped being humanised and being subjected to transfiguration. Humanity did not change its place in creation, but it did change its *relation* with creation and hence its perception and understanding of the created universe, its sense and meaning as related to the task of mediation which was handed to man and which he did not fulfil. What is characteristic for the present condition is not only related to deceptive desires and passions, as the Church teaches us, but that the very process of learning of the external world is the direct consequence of this condition as the necessity of adaptation and biological survival as well as a still archetypically present, but obscured, desire to grasp the sense of humanity in the universe. Maximus refers to that initial "wisdom" granted to man whose loss led to the demands of scholarship and learning. And the learning itself is the result that there appeared between man and God some obstacle, some division which, in order to be overcome, must be studied. The very process of learning of the world is treated by Maximus as the loss of superiority, lordship of man over creation. This leads humanity to see the universe in the image of its own moral decline, so that man

builds the world in its own image. Theologically speaking, the learning activities which are pursued by the sciences represent the content of what is meant by the garments of skin. This, nevertheless, does not diminish the positive aspects of the garments of skin for they were granted to man after the Fall with the purpose not only of physical survival, but of the recreation and renewal of those obscured aspects of being created "in the image of God," which were not destroyed and did not perish entirely. God did not strip man of his reason, as a manifestation of dominion over creation, and it is through the empirical and theoretical acquisition of the outer reality, that is through knowledge and scientific practices, that the world was shaped in a coherent image of the *cosmos*. However, the most important and constructive positive usage of the human condition in the garments of skin comes from the inherent possibility to search through the world in flux and mutability for the permanent good and the foundation of the world, that is, as we said before, to preserve an essential dimension of the human condition to transcend the world, that is to resist being spiritually supressed by the immensities of the universe through which cosmology portrays man as its speck of dust, to retain in humanity its difference from the world, its centrality to creation through that archetypical memory of the initial communion with God.

This gives another insight in making our discussion relevant: for it is through the eyes of Maximus the Confessor, that we can look at the sense of cosmological theories, not only as related to the physical reality involved in the constant flux and decay, but as those elements of instability and disorder, causing anxiety and despair in some human hearts dressed in the "garments of skin" which advance them back to the archetypical state, that is towards that which is beyond it, to that which, in a paradoxically temporal sense, belongs to the age to come. It is only through the reversal of the "path of Adam" through spiritual insight into the sense of creation, as the process directed to the future, that the task of relating the universe to its Creator can be fulfilled. Thus only a theological way of bringing together Maximus the Confessor and modern cosmology is possible: if we do this, we put ourselves on the paths of the "positive" use of the "garments of skin" to recreate that impetus which is left latent of the human creation "in the image." This constitutes an unavoidable existential and theological commitment to

any dialogue between science and Christianity: the reason to involve cosmology in the context of Maximus' thought is to use this cosmology as a tool in restoring the "image," and thus ascending to God, through continuing that work of mediation between divisions in creation (articulated by cosmology), which has been performed by Christ, and which is yet to be accomplished by man.

Creatio ex nihilo in Maximus the Confessor and modern cosmology

There is no need to speak at length about one of the major elements of the Christian teaching, namely the affirmation that the world was created by God out of nothing. Maximus predecessors Basil the Great and Augustine asserted this differently. Basil the Great, in his *Hexaemeron* made a distinction between creation of the intelligible world with no temporal flux and no spatial dimension, and the creation of the visible universe together with "the succession of time, for ever passing on and passing away and never stopping in its course." Basil asserts that the meaning of the Biblical phrase "In the beginning God created" must be understood as "in the beginning of time." That is, God created the visible world together with time, and it was the beginning of time in the visible world. In order to articulate the atemporal nature of "the beginning of the world," and to remove any causation at the beginning in terms of time-series, Basil affirms that "the beginning, in effect, is indivisible and instantaneous...the beginning of time is not yet time and not even the least particle of it." Augustine in his *Confessions*, XI addressed the problem of the origin of time directly, affirming similarly to Basil that: "The way, God, in which you made heaven and earth was not that you made them either in heaven or on earth....Nor did you make the universe within the framework of the universe. There was nowhere for it to be made before it was brought into existence." The last sentence is a proper theological reaction to any cosmology wich postulates preexistent time or space in which the visible universe originates. Augustine asserts that the universe was not created by God in time, but was created with time. Augustine affirmed the creation of the universe and time within it as the only consistent expression of the Christian affirmation of *creatio ex nihilo*. The *nihilo* could not be something: it could not have any attributes of created things; it must be an absolute philosophical no-thing.

Maximus the Confessor, following his predecessors, repeats that the world was created out of nothing because of God's will and goodness, by his Wisdom and Logos. But in Maximus the createdness of the word implies its non-eternity and consequently its beginning in time. However, in spite of that, this beginning in time can be understood only from within the already created world (according to Augustine this cannot be a "beginning" as if it would be seen outside the world), Maximus presses this point by pointing to a difficulty which can arise. Let us read a passage from his *Centuries on Charity* 4.3: "God, who is eternally Creator, creates when He wills by His consubstantial Word and Spirit, because of His infinite goodness." This is a general statement which does not raise any questions because this is a matter of religious conviction. Then Maximus anticipates a polemical question on details of this creation of the world: "Nor must you object: Why did He create *at a certain time* since He was always good?" Here the question is formulated from within those categories of sequence and time which pertain to the already created world. Indeed, if the creation of the world happened several thousand years ago measured by the created time, why this age of the world is such as it is; in other words, can we enquire into the nature of this age's contingent facticity as it is contemplated from within creation? Maximus gives a characteristic response—"no": "The unsearchable wisdom of the infinite essence does not fall under human knowledge." It is impossible to transcend the boundaries of the created and to enquire into its facticity on the grounds of the impossibility of knowing the divine volitions and intentions; creation remains a divine mystery connected with divine providence. This response has general apophatic overtones related to the unknowability of God. However, if one carefully looks into the structure of the question to which Maximus attempts to respond, one finds that the very formulation of the question implies a possibility to treat the creation of the world as if it is embedded into a preexistent background of space and time from within which one can "look" at the creation and ask a question on the specificity of this or that "moment" of its happening in the preexistent scheme of things. Certainly one could refer to Augustine's ways of responding simply pointing to the fact that before the world was created no preexistent entities such as all-embracing space or time could exist. Such an Augustinian response would be too general and requires explication in contemporary setting. Indeed to ask why creation "now"

(six thousand years ago) but not later or before, would imply the possibility of approaching the creation in the objective scheme of things, that is to position it as an "event" which could be constituted in rubrics of thought as something external to it. However this logic is futile, for every act of such an interrogation, that is the very question formulated by Maximus, presupposes already that it takes place in the rubrics of the created.

The beginning of the world and its created temporality can be grasped from within the world, so that this beginning is the constituted beginning from within the world. However no constitution or objectivization of this beginning is possible from beyond the world, because this "beyond the world" is not an "object" but rather the condition of the very possibility of the world to be manifested *to* as articulated *by* man. In this sense, the beginning of the universe is the limiting point of human consciousness attempting to grasp the facticity of the world. What has been formulated by Maximus as a paradox (which has its own predecessors) has relevance to contemporary thought in philosophy and cosmology, which has not only an abstract, but methodological significance.

The situation, with the uncertainty of the "when" of creation of the world, can indeed be paralleled with contemporary cosmology very easily. The question, formally, is about the impossibility of physics to give account of the initial conditions for those dynamical laws which drive matter and space of the universe. The dichotomy between the laws of evolution of the universe and the initial conditions which fix a specific outcome of these laws (which is manifested in an actual display of the visible universe) acquires some unique features in cosmology. Since we can speculate on the nature of these conditions only from within our universe by extrapolating backward the properties of the observable universe, the "knowledge" of the initial conditions thus achieved does not tell us anything about the genuine nature of these conditions, as if there were special physical laws responsible for these conditions, separated from us in the past and not being similar to laws of dynamics. Being bounded by the universe in which we live, we cannot know the "laws" of the initial conditions of the universe as if they could be attested from beyond the universe. In this respect, the ideal variant for cosmologists wishing to describe the creation of matter in the universe (not space and time) would be to construct an initial state such that the total energy of matter would be equal to zero, and this requirement would be a meta-

law, imposed on the matter of the future universe in the *preexistent* space and time. This kind of a model was offered by Tryon, and it was carefully interpreted later from a philosophical point of view by Isham. The major feature of this model is that the universe originates in *preexistent* space and time as a result of a fluctuation of the physical vacuum (a physical state of quantum matter in which the values of all observables of particles are zero). Geometrically, the development of the universe can be presented as a future light cone, whose apex is positioned completely arbitrarily in preexistent space and time.

It is exactly this arbitrariness of the "place" and "moment" of origination of the visible universe in the background of the preexistent space and time which constitutes a philosophical difficulty similar to that of Maximus: it is impossible to specify and justify why the universe originated at a specific point of space and time. In this theory, the spontaneous creation of the universe could occur anywhere and at any moment of time of preexistent space and time. (This means that a variety of different universes could originate at different locations of the preexistent space-time, driving cosmology to face a serious problem of the mutual influence of different universes. See Fig. 1)

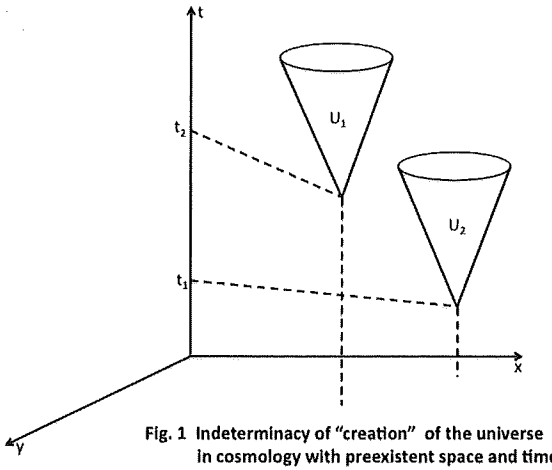

Fig. 1 Indeterminacy of "creation" of the universe in cosmology with preexistent space and time

There is no need to argue that this kind of model has nothing to do with creation out of nothing in a theological sense, for space, time, the meta-law, and the quantum vacuum are all assumed to be preexis-

tent. It is reasonable to talk about the *temporal origination* of the material universe rather than about its creation out of nothing.

The logical difficulty of models with preexistent space and time is connected with our inability to locate the moment of time when the universe originated, from outside, by transcending beyond the universe itself, into its imaginable preexistent "before." We can argue about the beginning of time within the visible universe by extrapolating its expansion backward in time. But this will never allow one to claim scientifically that there either was or was not preexistent time "before" our universe came into existence. The situation was described by Kant in terms of his first cosmological antinomy as a logical tension between thesis, that the world has a beginning in time and is also limited as regards space, and antithesis, that the world has no beginning and no limits in space; it is infinite as regards both time and space.

In modern terms, the thesis corresponds to the view that the universe as we know it is unique, and the Big Bang is an absolute beginning of the universe, as well as time and space. There are no reasonable arguments about the existence of anything beyond our universe and "prior" to the Big Bang; the latter is the absolute beginning of being. Any attempt to speculate about "outside" and "before" the universe, would be, in the spirit of Kantian philosophy, an ambitious attempt of the reason to depart from the empirical series of causation, corresponding to the visible universe, towards purely intelligible series which do not have the same ontological significance.

The antithesis corresponds to the model of the universe with all-encompassing, preexistent infinite time and space, where the visible universe is one particular realization of a potentially infinite number of universes, corresponding to different initial conditions at different moments of preexistent time. Because of the impossibility of locating the point of origination of our universe in the preexistent time and hence of making this point special, one cannot claim that there is no time and space beyond the visible universe. It can originate at any moment of preexistent time so that there could be, potentially, an infinite time before the visible universe came into being. (Here is the problem addressed by Maximus in case one asked "Why did God create recently and not sooner?")

The antinomy which arises in any cosmology with preexistent space and time can be considered from a different perspective, without any reference to space and time, which brings us even closer to the thinking of Maximus the Confessor. For example, the thesis can be treated as the affirmation that the visible universe is unique and finite as regards space and time, whereas the antithesis as that the visible universe, being finite in terms of its temporal past, is one particular representative out of the *ensemble* of universes with different boundary conditions (corresponding in the previous logic to different moments of their origination in preexistent time). The plurality of different boundary conditions corresponds to the logical multitude of a Platonic-like kind, so that the antinomial nature of any predication on the uniqueness or not of these conditions becomes evident because the ontological status of that which is predicated in thesis and antithesis is different: while with respect to the visible universe we can make an empirical inference, an assumption that there is the ensemble of universes, which we cannot verify empirically, requires an intellectual inference, that is the reference to the realm of the intelligible. In this case the whole meaning of the antinomy reveals itself as predication about two ontologically distinct realities, that is the empirical visible universe and the Platonic-like ensemble of the universes. If we extrapolate this reasoning back to the problems, discussed by Maximus the Confessor, the question posed by him in the *Centuries on Charity* 4.3 must be transformed in such a way that the temporal aspect of the specificity of the creation of the world is replaced by the aspect of "choice" of this particular world out of many potential possible worlds, namely "Why did God choose to create this world but not the other?" (See Fig. 2)

To tackle this issue Maximus introduced different arguments.

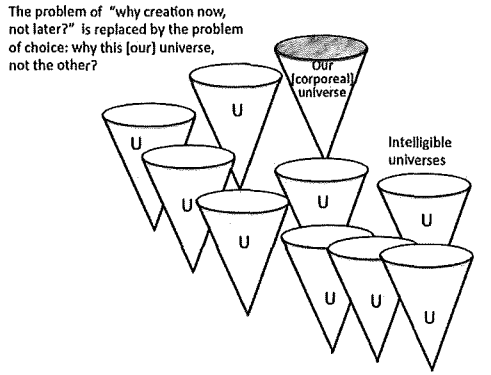

Fig. 2 Ensemble of intelligible universes with different initial [boundary] conditions

The Origin of the Universe and the *logoi* of Creation

In *Ambigua* 7 Maximus states that "the *logoi* of all things known by God before their creation are securely fixed in God.... Yet all these things, things present and things to come, have not been brought into being contemporaneously with their being known by God; rather each was created in appropriate way according to its *logos* at the proper time according to the wisdom of the maker...." He makes a distinction between knowledge of things by God in their *logoi* and their actual coming into being. Knowledge of things even if they are known eternally does not imply the necessity of their existence as created. There is an ontological incommensurability between things known by God as potentially existent and those which were brought into being. If one applies this thought to the universe as a whole, one can suggest that the knowledge by God of this universe with a potential to become created does not necessarily imply its creation. There is a gap in the necessitation between knowledge and actual creation which is based, according to Maximus, in the Divine wisdom and will and which not only brings all things from the created world into existence at their proper time, but ultimately brings the actually existing world as a whole into existence. The words of Maximus related to the wisdom of the Creator with regard to the "determination" of a proper moment of creation can be, by a matter of philosophical suggestion, applied to the "determination of the choice" of the world as such, or, in terms of contemporary cosmological phraseology, the choice of the world with those boundary conditions which led to the actual display of the universe. Then the question is: "Could God know not only of this world which he has actually created, but other potential worlds which either have not been created at all, or have been created in a different *mode* of being?" If the answer is yes, then we must suppose that just as God applied his wisdom for creating this world, He must have been wise in not creating other worlds, or creating them in a different *mode* of being. Obviously this wisdom must reveal itself through God's will to make a choice in the actual creation of this world. Correspondingly, all other worlds, being only potential possibilities either remained as they were or they were implanted in the whole creation through a different representation, for example, as intelligible entities with their *logoi* being such that these intelligible worlds are not destined to acquire any corporeal shape,

remaining only the images and prints of the divine wisdom not through empirical gaze, but through an intellectual search and contemplation. In this sense, the very idea of the variety of the "boundary" conditions for the created world manifests itself as a pointer, *paradeigmata*, toward the divine wisdom which can be detected through the contemplation of things in this universe. If our way of extrapolating Maximus' thought is correct, then it relieves us from the uncertainty of creation related to the allegedly preexistent time and makes the problem of temporal beginning transformed toward the problem of the ontological distinction, separation, or extension (*diastema*) between God and the world. This transformation allows one to look at the distinction and differentiation between God and the universe in terms of a definite structure, namely in terms of the difference between that world which has its corporeal representation and those potential worlds which do not have such a representation, remaining no more then intelligible traces of that which could be known by God, but not created in the corporeal form. Here we come to a question of the basic ontological difference in the actually created world, the basic *diaphora* in creation which is treated as a constitutive element of *creatio ex nihilo*.

One can suggest that the ultimate objective of Maximus was to provide a logical and philosophical argument that the world has a temporal beginning in the sense that it is not eternal and hence incommensurable with God on the grounds of an ontological difference between its corruptible and transient parts, as well as its totality, and that which is by definition, eternal, immutable, and incorruptible. The fact that the world's parts are subject to temporal flux and decay is part of the mundane experience. The question of the temporality and decay of the world as a whole is much more problematic. Everything depends on how this wholeness is understood: if it is just an additive something comprised of the parts, then the criteria of the finitude and created temporality can be applied to the world as well. However there is a difficulty, which is well understood in modern cosmology, that one cannot speak about the universe as a whole as being in space and time and hence as subject to the same constitutional synthesis which is applied to separate physical objects. In this sense, the universe as a whole is not in space and time. However this does not remove the problem of its sufficient foundation. If this universe as a whole is not eternal (in terms of immanent time),

then it has a "transcendent beginning" which rather implies a logical origination, or as dependence upon something which is absolutely necessary and eternal as immutable. In this case, the question of the "beginning of the world" becomes a question of its contingency upon the trans-worldly, upon something other in an ontological sense. In other words, even if cosmology would pronounce that the world is eternal as evolving indefinitely in terms of the immanent time, this eternity as an endless temporal flux has a different ontological status in comparison with the transworldly eternity understood as absolutely necessary being.

Here we come to an interesting point about the wholeness of the universe. For Maximus, the whole or the totality of the universe was not of the same ontological order as the parts of the universe (*Mystagogy* 1). In his time, when physics applied to the whole visible universe did not exist, it was natural to suspect that the decoherent and chaotic parts in the created order are brought to the unity by the supreme principle of harmony and beauty, which is God himself. This was the point of view of Athanasius of Alexandria before Maximus, as well as that of Maximus himself. Nowadays, cosmology presents the whole of the visible display of the universe as ordered and structured due to the physical laws which act across the universe, including its remote past. Correspondingly, the wholeness of the universe is understood as its parts being held together by the forces of nature. There still remains a question on the origin of these laws: some suggestions point to the *boundary conditions* of the universe which are responsible for this order and which are not accessible to their empirical determination. Ultimately this means that the totality of the universe refers to a kind of "beginning = boundary" which "separates" this universe from that which is "beyond" it in an ontological sense, as contingent upon "that" beyond. Modern cosmology asserts the totality of the universe not as a sum total of its parts, but as that unique remote state in the past of the universe which is treated as the originary origin of the universe, the so called Big Bang. One can responsibly think of the totality of the universe only through the notion of the Big Bang, because it is only in the vicinity of the Big Bang one could potentially have access to the universe in its entirety: the visible part of the universe comprises only a tiny part of the universe as a whole, physically relating to it only through the common

origin in the Big Bang. Graphically this can be illustrated with the help of a diagram where the visible universe is indicated by the onion-like curve, whereas the rest of the circle is that universe which is invisible to us (see Fig. 3).

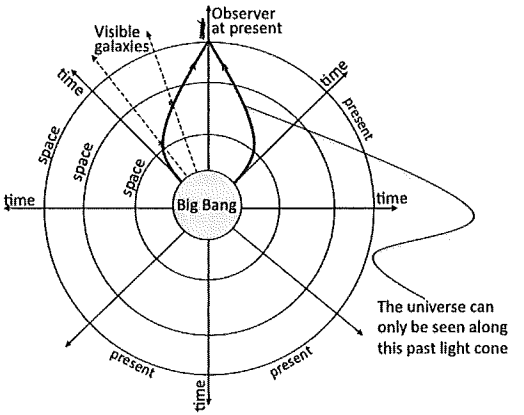

Fig. 3 The unity of the universe as generated from the Big Bang

The center of this diagram symbolizes the Big Bang and the concentric circles the universe as a whole corresponding to different cosmic times. The unity of the universe for every moment of time is guaranteed by its procession from the original Big Bang state. However we, being contingently positioned in the universe, can potentially have access to this totality only in the Big Bang, that is in the remote past. Thus, according to contemporary cosmology, the totality of the universe in the sense implied by Maximus (that is, this totality is not of the same ontological order as things of the universe) is encapsulated in the Big Bang, which is an intelligible construct (together with the universe as a whole) rather than anything empirically accessible. One can conclude that the evolutionary universe with the finitude pertaining to it, such as temporal flux and decay, points to the original state beyond which physics is problematic. This entails a conclusion that the totality of the universe in its contingent formation refers to its otherness, which in scientific cosmology (not in theology), can mean not the transworldly foundation, but an ontologically different (but created), *intelligible* unity, which is invoked by theoretical scientists. In this sense, epistemologically, the wholeness of the world is not in the physical world *per se*, but in the intelligible world,

which, however, can be grasped through the observation of things empirical. Where this intelligible unity comes from and why it is possible to detect it at all, these questions can be answered by reference to Maximus; according to him, the principle of unity in totality explicates to some extent the content of that to which he refers as *logoi of creation*.

In brief, the *logoi* of natural created beings, which are the forming principles and ideas of the sensible and intelligible things, on the one hand, are apprehended as existing through the links with their common source, that is the Divine Logos; on the other hand, the same *logoi* can be considered with respect to the world which is constituted by them. The whole created world is seen then as manifesting the different intensities (condensations) of the incarnation of the Logos, which is mysteriously hidden in His *logoi* under the surface of the created being. The *logoi* have a complex relationship to the Logos of God and to the created world. On the one hand, according to Maximus the *logoi* are preexistent in God; on the other hand, God called them to realization in concrete creation to show forth the continual presence the Logos in Creation. One can assert that the *logoi* are both *transcendent* to and *immanent* with the created world; as immanent they manifest the divine intentions and principles of every single nature, that is, of every object, thing, law, and their intelligible image; they manifest the *existential purpose* of every thing they materialize in the created order, but they are not themselves created. In other words, their "material" manifestations through sensible things and their intelligible images do not condition them from within the creation; for they have the ground of their immanent manifestations in the transcendent Logos. The *logoi* do not dissolve the Logos, and their unity in the Logos does not eliminate their individuality. The *logoi* are thus neither identical with the essence of God, nor with the empirical forms of existence of the things of the created world. Maximus invokes a geometrical analogy (used before him by Proclus, Plotinus and Dionysius the Areopagite), that of the radii and the centre of a circle, in order to describe the relationship between the Logos, Who is the center of a circle, and the *logoi* which represent the radii of the circle, originating from the center and terminating on the boundary of a circle, which imitates the created realm.

Now, coming back to the issue of the totality of the universe, one can give an interpretation of the cosmological diagram in Fig. 3, com-

bining it with the graphical presentation of the *logoi* by Maximus mentioned above. On the one hand, seen from within the created universe, the principle of unity of this universe can be referred to the Big Bang as that originary origin which gives rise to all states of the physical universe afterwards. The radii at this diagram originate at the original singularity of the Big Bang and terminate at the circumference which denotes the present day state of the universe as a whole. The wholeness of the universe represented by the set of circles in this diagram manifest itself as an intelligible "object" (a construct) which is accessible only through intellectual intuition because there is no empirical access to the universe outside of the past light cone. In different words, it can be said that the universe as a whole is enhypostasized by us, whereas the physical unity of the universe had been in existence only in its past, that is in the Big Bang. From the point of view of observations even this remains no more than a hypothetical possibility because the universe was hot and nontransparent before a certain early age (300-400 thousand years after the Big Bang) so that at the present stage of knowledge the "empirical access" to the past of the universe is possible only through experiments based on fundamental particle theories. The *logos* of the unity and totality of the universe can thus manifest itself either through a causal connection of the visible universe and the rest of its totality at the Big Bang, or through *intelligible causality* of the present-day visible universe to the allegedly existing overall totality of the universe (beyond the visible). The contemplation and intellection of the universe as a whole lead the human mind to a split in its representation into its physical part and an intelligible counterpart, revealing that which Maximus the Confessor called the basic *diaphora* in creation, namely the difference between the realm of sensible and intelligible.

Cosmology of the Big Bang predicts the multitude of causally disconnected regions in the universe. This causal disconnectedness can be interpreted as the initial disordering of the universe related to its being created out of nothing, that nothing which does not have any principles of order. However, there is still one ordering principle which unites all causally disconnected parts of the universe, namely the principle that all these parts have a common origin. The principle of this origin, its *logos*, being a principle by definition, must have its explication and, at least, an outward formulation. Thus cosmology of the universe as a

whole needs this principle to be spelled out; it pronounces it as the *cosmological principle*, that is the principle of the uniformity of the universe: the universe as a whole, to be physically comprehensible and explicable, must look the same at large scales from all possible hypothetical places in the universe which are not accessible to human observers. Thus we see that the *logos* of creation of the universe receives its further elucidation as the *principle of explicability* of the universe by human beings. But this principle of rationality of the universe is generated by the Logos of God through Whom and by Whom this universe is created. The elucidation of what is meant by the *logos* of creation through the cosmological principle does not entail that this *logos* is known in the sense of Maximus. One can account, for example, neither for the facticity of this principle as such, nor for the contingent facticity of the universe. Still, there is at least a twofold elucidation of this *logos*: the constitutive difference in creation between what is visible and what is not, brought to their mutual unity in knowledge through the cosmological principle of homogeneity in the created order.

Now one can combine the cosmological diagram (Fig. 3) with the graphical presentation of the *logoi* by Maximus, extending it to three dimensions where the vertical dimension corresponds to the transworldly foundation of the universe (see Fig. 4).

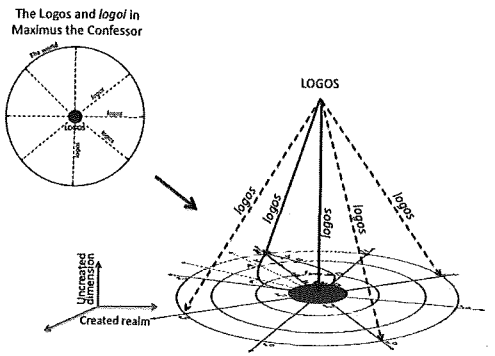

Fig. 4 From theogenic uniformity of the universe to its cosmographic uniformity

On the one hand the vertical dimension links the original point of the universe (the Big Bang) with the Logos of God by whom and through whom the visible universe (as well as the non-observable and invisible) was

brought into being. This vertical link can be associated with the *logos* of creation, related to the universe as we understand it. However the presence of the *logoi* is not restricted only to the Big Bang. The universe as a whole (including the visible one) is supported and sustained by the *logoi* in all aspects of its existence, so that the *logoi* proceed from the Logos to all other points of the universe (the boundary of a circle) at present. In this sense, the meaning of the cosmological principle as the equivalence of all points on the circumference at present time can be interpreted as a *theogenic* uniformity related to the presence of the *logoi* in all potentially possible points of the universe. The *logos* of creation receives its further formulation as a principle of *theogenic* uniformity of the universe. The question of on what grounds cosmology can proceed from the *theogenic* uniformity to the cosmographic uniformity (cosmological principle) relates to the nature of how the Divine image in human subjectivity (perceiving the theogenic uniformity) cascades towards its appropriation of the external world imposing the principle of uniformity upon it. The temporal beginning of the created universe in this diagram means that the Big Bang itself was not in place on the same ontological level as it is for the Logos: the appearance of the original point in the diagram implies the appearance together with it of the whole plane of creation which corresponds to two dimensions of this diagram. However, it is quite difficult to express graphically the ontological "non-simultaneity" of the universe and the Logos.

The important conclusion from this discussion is that modern cosmology, in spite of all its attempts to predicate the initial state of the universe through the theories of the Big Bang, comes to the same conclusion which was grasped by Maximus long before, namely that the "original" state of the universe which symbolizes its unity, identity, and totality cannot be defined in immanent terms; it requires a founding principle which explicates the *logos* of creation of the universe, the principle which can be formulated in Maximus' words as "the whole of creation admits of one and the same undiscriminated *logos*, as having not been before it is," or, "the divine principle which holds the entire creation together is that it should have non-being as the ground of its being." This helps to give the discursive explanation for what it means to *detect* the presence of the *logos* of creation from within the created realm: namely to establish the understanding that every created object, be it intelligible or sensible, is theogenically uniform; that is, it has one and

the same transcendent ground of its existence in its nonexistence (non-being) or, in different words, in its otherness. It is this *theogenic* uniformity which cascades, in cosmology, to the *cosmographic* uniformity.

Modern cosmology is unanimous in that the Big Bang was an *event* in the past which is extraordinary and antecedently efficacious with respect to all possible events that happened in the universe since then. This exceptional event, predicted theoretically and having some observational consequences tests the limits of the physical sciences. Physics which has been discovered on the planet earth in a relatively short historical period can be applied only up to this ultimate boundary in the past of the universe beyond which any serious scientific claim is impossible. In spite of the obvious fact that there is no evidence to claim that this event can be directly associated with *creatio ex nihilo*, its theoretical prediction at least sheds light on some constitutive elements of *creatio ex nihilo*, which explicate the *logos* of creation of the universe. We intentionally avoid any talk about the "explanation" of the creation of the universe out of nothing; instead we speak of the detection of the *logos* of creation, the *logos* of that originary state in the visible universe with respect to which human comprehension experiences a full stop. Now, however, the important thing to realize is that the detection of this *logos* contains in itself a movement of human thought in two opposite directions: on the one hand the detection of the *logos* takes place through the contemplation of the universe through scientific advance as a process directed to the future. On the other hand, an attempt to detect the *logos* through the advancement of the theory of the original past of the universe positions the intended material pole of cosmological explanation as being in the temporal past of the world. In other words, the explication of the *logos* of creation of the universe as related to its past becomes the *telos* of cosmological explanation. To understand the cosmos and make it fully "humanized" in the sense of Maximus' *makro-anthropos* idea, one must understand its origination, those constitutive elements in creation which point to the *logos* of creation of the universe. One can reiterate this by saying that when Maximus appeals in the natural attitude of consciousness to the idea of the *logos* of creation, he implies that the unfolding of the sense of this *logos*, its mental and linguistic explication (through or with the help of natural contemplation) is a dynamic process which is always directed to the future, but whose ultimate goal is to understand

the sense of the creation of the world either in the sense of the temporal past or in the sense of the ontological otherness with respect to God. Since the creation of the world in Maximus was based in the divine wisdom and will, the detection of the presence of the *logos* of creation through cosmological theories ultimately points towards the wisdom and will of God which are hidden in creation. The *telos* which pertains to the human ascent to the Divine as overcoming obstacles in grasping the unity of creation and God and which, according to Maximus, is destined to transfigure the whole universe, becomes in cosmology the *telos* of cosmological explanation, that is an ultimate unfolding of the sense of the universe's contingent facticity, as well as the contingent facticity of human beings. However this *telos* can only be fulfilled through the reference to the saving economy of the Divine in the created world. This brings into our discussion another dimension which makes the issue of creation of the world closely connected with the Incarnation of the Logos of God in Jesus Christ.

Humanity in the Universe: the Motive of the Incarnation

Christian theology asserts the creation of the world out of nothing by the Divine wisdom and will. This means that, on the one hand, there is no necessary link between the essence of God and the essence of the world; on the other hand, the world is created according to that wisdom which makes it possible to fulfil the Divine economy and entails that the perennial issue of the contingent facticity of the created world must somehow be linked to the divine intentions with respect to this world. The contingent facticity of the universe means that its physical parameters have specific values: modern cosmology teaches us that the physical universe is old (13.7 billion years) and huge (its potentially visible size corresponds to 10^{28} cm). Humanity lives in the periphery of a mediocre galaxy among billions and billions of other galaxies, in a mediocre stellar system with the contingent number of planets at one of which exists life. The contingency of humanity in the universe means that it is because of the spatial and temporal incommensurability between the universe and human embodied creatures that there is no sense of talking about the cosmographic centrality of the planet Earth. There are specific cosmic conditions which must *necessarily* be satisfied for human beings to be possible in their biological form. These condi-

tions tell us not only that we live in a very special planet but that we live at a particular temporal era in the universe's development. This era is characterized by two major factors: the availability of the physical material (stardust) to form human bodies and particular large-scale parameters of expansion of the universe, including the tiny balance between the major physical constituents of the universe, which allow us to contemplate and observe the visible universe in such a state in order to draw conclusions about its evolution and origin in the remote past. Thus, in spite of a mediocre position in space, we live in a special era of time which is effectively responsible not only for our physical shape but also for our ability to learn about the universe and detect the presence of the *logos* of creation. Here we come back to the theological question posed in the beginning of this paragraph: why was the world created by God out of nothing in such a peculiar way in order to have us, that is, those who praise God through relating the universe to Him? Rephrased formally, it can amount to a question of the sufficient conditions for humanity's existence in the image of God.

The answer to this question could come from a theological assertion that God contemplated the creation of the world in the perspective of the mystery of Christ, that is, the Incarnation of the Logos of God. Seen post-factum, the Incarnation required a human body, a body of Jesus, as well as the body of his mother. The existence of a body is related to the specific physical and biological conditions which are necessary for their possibility, and, as it is understood in cosmology, the whole structure of the observable universe, its spatial and temporal scales, are pivotal for that. Correspondingly, there is a question: does the free creation of the world out of love by the Divine Counsel presuppose an element of necessity related to the Incarnation of the Logos which was foreseen before the creation of the world and which is related to the recapitulation of humanity in Christ?

One can conjecture that the structure of the natural world has a direct relation to God's providential activity in the world in order to fulfill His plan. This implies that for the Incarnation of God to take place on Earth, in the visible universe, this universe must possess some features such that the making of man in God's image, as well as the Incarnation of God in human flesh, would be possible. This links the creation of the universe and its structure to the phenomenon of man, and

the Incarnation articulates this link, making the whole sense of it rather hypostatic, that is, being grounded in the will and love of the personal God, who transfers the image of His personality to human beings who in turn can articulate the universe as being amazingly fashioned in order to sustain life. The cosmological anthropic principle which links the structure of the universe to the conditions of biological existence can then receive its theological generalization as that principle which links the structure of space-time and matter of the entire universe with the possibility of the Incarnation. Apart from the physic-biological conditions for the existence of living beings, this extension touches upon the most important aspect in being of humanity related to its being the center of the disclosure and manifestation of the universe from within the universe, that is, its further enhypostasisation through knowledge which partially explicates the sense of what is meant by the Divine image of man. The Divine image requires not only the human body, but the archetype of the hypostasis of Christ. To have knowledge of the universe as a whole, humanity must have been endowed with that ability of the fully human Jesus Christ to experience the universe as "all in all" through Christ the Logos who is fully divine and through whom and by whom the universe is created and sustained. Correspondingly, the abovementioned extension of the anthropic principle transforms into a theological principle of the creation of man in the image of God: the universe must have been created in such a way in order to have the conditions for the creation of man in the image of God, the conditions which have been recapitulated in the Incarnation. However, as we will articulate this below, humanity is not just the purpose of creation and can be understood only in the context of the promise of God for its salvation.

The reformulation of the cosmological anthropic principle in terms of humanity made in the image of God, presupposes that humanity is not treated anymore as a *natural microcosm*. Rather it acquires a different status, related to its personhood, and can be termed as a *hypostatic microcosm*. What is meant by this term can be grasped from the fact that human reason can penetrate in thought through space and time and contemplate in different symbols things "both invisible and invisible," both micro-particles and cosmological structures, pointing toward man's ability to transcend empirical nature and enter the realm of intelligible forms. It is because of the hypostatic unity of the body

and soul that it is possible to argue (together with Maximus the Confessor as well as other patristic writers) that man, in a way, imitates in his composition the whole universe, both the empirical realm (that is, explicitly visible) and the intelligible (which is invisible). In other words, it manifests in itself the basic *diaphora* ("difference") in creation that points to the *logos* that holds the different parts of creation together. The unity of humankind in relation to the universe is affirmed then as the similarity of their *logoi*.

Maximus the Confessor developed an allegorical interpretation of the universe as man, and conversely of man as microcosm and mediator between the elements of the universe, and between the universe and God. He articulates the similarity between the composition of the human being and the composition of the universe from a point of view of the hypostatic unity of the different parts in them. A passage from Maximus' *Mystagogy* 7 elucidates the meaning of this similarity:

> Intelligible things display the meaning of the soul as the soul does that of intelligible things, and [...] sensible things display the place of the body as the body does that of sensible things. And [...] intelligible things are the soul of sensible things, and sensible things are the body of intelligible things; [...] as the soul is in the body so is the intelligible in the world of sense, that the sensible is sustained by the intelligible as the body is sustained by the soul; [...] both make up *one world* as body and soul make up *one man*.

In a scientific cosmological context, this text can be interpreted as an insight that is able to lead the cosmologist beyond the sphere of the visible universe, which is accessible to the senses, to that which is invisible (for example, to the wholeness of the universe or its origin) and can only be described in the mathematical terms with which human reason (being the analytical part of the soul) operates. Reason dwells in the body, and it is through the visible universe that reason reaches the intelligible universe. The latter also indwells in the visible, in spite of being different from it. It is because of the hypostatic unity of the body and soul in the cosmologists that they can reveal the hypostatic unity of the visible and intelligible universe. A cosmologist relates opposing phenomena: the small (atoms) and the large (galaxies); the visible, present cosmos and its invisible past; the cosmos as a multiplicity of different visible facts (stars, galaxies, the distribution

of clusters of galaxies, etc.) and the mathematical cosmos (as uniform and isotropic space, etc.).

The human ability to recapitulate through knowledge all constituents of the universe, and to realize that the human being is deeply dependent on the natural aspects both of the microworld and the cosmos as a whole, makes the position of humans in the universe exceptional and unique. The recapitulation of the universe in man takes place not only on the natural level (as is affirmed in the anthropic arguments), but—and this is much more non-trivial—on the hypostatic level, for this hypostatic recaptulation implies that human beings are participating in the outward *hypostasization* of their own existence by revealing the meaning of various levels of the universe. This is possible only because human beings can use their own hypostasis in order to bring the not-yet-articulate *existents* in the universe to a proper, personal mode of existing, that is, to existence through apprehension by hypostatic persons. In other words, the human person, or humankind in general, in spite of being physically located in one particular point of the universe, shares its existence with all other places and ages of the universe through the fusion made possible by knowledge. This existence of the universe in the other, that is, in human beings, means that the universe is *en-hypostasised* by human beings. Humanity as an event, having been created hypostatically inherent in the Logos, becomes itself the source of a further expansion of hypostatic inherence in the universe that takes the form of a revelation of the intelligibility of the universe, its purpose and end to and through the human person.

Incarnation and the Universe: from Cosmos of the World to Cosmos of the Church

If one looks at cosmology separately from any philosophical or theological insights, cosmology manifests in its cognitive structure the presence of the hypostatic microcosmic dimension of humanity because, as we mentioned before, the very articulation of the non-local and practically incommensurable universe requires one to have abilities exceeding physical and biological properties. Hypostatic human beings have access to the intelligible realm where the image of the universe as a whole belongs to. Thus in one and the same human being the universe is present both through bodily consubstantialilty with it and through

the hypostatic inherence of it within human subjectivity. What makes the image of the universe as a whole possible and what the principle is which holds this image interlinked with the physical universe remains a deep philosophical and theological mystery. To address this mystery one needs to turn to the hidden Christological dimension in cosmology, in particular, to the relevance of the Incarnation to it. Indeed the Incarnation provides us with the only available historical and archetypical evidence of how the human being, that is, a being with a fully human nature, can hold the entire universe in a single consciousness. To make it more explicit, it is worth appealing to the non-trivial connection between the problem of space in the universe and the concept of the Incarnation.

The link between the Incarnation and the spatial display of the universe takes the form of a paradox. On the one hand, Jesus Christ, being in his nature fully a man, lived in the world and was located in a body in a particular place and time in the Earth's history. On the other hand, being fully God, He did not leave his "place" on the right hand side of the Father, and thus, being God, was present not only in Palestine two thousand years ago, but was always present in all places and times of the universe created by him. We have here a non-trivial temporal and spatial relationship between the finite "track" of Jesus in empirical space and time and the whole history of the universe as the unity of "all in all" of speces and times of the universe.

It was Origen who first reflected on the extraordinary position of Christ, being man and God, in the universe conceived of in terms of space:

> Though the God of the whole universe descends in his own power with Jesus to live the life of men, and the Word which 'was in the beginning with God and was himself God' comes to us; yet he does not leave his home and desert his state.

Origen stressed here the point that God, who is the Creator and governor of the whole universe, by becoming incarnate in the flesh in Jesus Christ, did not cease to be, as God, the provider of existence and intelligibility for every thing at every point in the universe. Being incarnate in the flesh, that is, being a man among men, Christ as God was still ruling the whole universe and holding together the entire creation. By creating the universe and giving it meaning so that it could receive

his Son in the flesh, God has prepared a place for himself, but in such a way that while descending into the created world in a particular place and time, He still holds the entire creation together, being present himself in all possible "places" of the universe. One can say therefore that the Incarnation recapitulates the whole creation in the totality of its spatial and temporal spans, and not just human nature.

By being incarnate at one point of space and at the same time not leaving his "place" as transcendent Creator, and by holding together the wholeness of space, God demonstrates that his relationship to space is not a spatial relation. Origen asserts this explicitly:

> The power and divinity of God comes to dwell among men through the man whom God wills to chose and in whom he finds room without changing from one place to another or leaving his former place empty and filling another. Even supposing that we do say that he leaves one place and fills another, we would not mean this in any spatial sense.

Athanasius of Alexandria expressed the unity of the divine and human in Christ appealing to the analogy of space in terms similar to those used by Origen:

> Then the incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial Word of God entered our world. In one sense, indeed, he was not far from it before, for no part of creation had ever been without him who, while ever abiding in union with the Father, yet fills all things that are.

Athanasius argues in this passage that, in spite of the fact that the Son-Word of God descended to Earth in order to live with men, He did not become closer to us by doing so, for He is always in everything in the universe, which was made by him. "Space" is a predicate of the Word of God; it is determined by his agency and is to be understood according to his nature. This means that the "spatial relationship" between the Father and the Son is in no way analogous to the spatial relations among creaturely things. Human nature in Christ always operated within the reality of empirical space and historical time, whereas his divine nature was always beyond the empirical and intelligible aeons in the uncreated realm from where Christ the Logos of God coordinates the empirical space in which He dwelt in the body with the rest of the created universe. The Christ-event, being thus a manifestation of the spatio-temporal relationship be-

tween God and the physical universe expressed as an open-ended interaction between God and man, recapitulates the humankind-event in the universe, making the latter an expression of the interaction between man and God and of a contingent happening in the eternity of God.

One can use a different analogy in order to illustrate this point. Indeed, space and time are perceived by human beings from *within* creation and can be treated as "internal" forms of the relation of the universe with the transcendent Divine. This internal form of space and time cannot be conceived, however, without its "external" counterpart, that is its "boundary," which can hypothetically be articulated from "outside," that is from the perspective of the uncreated. The question that then arises is how is the internal space-time of the universe maintained in relationship with the divine "environment" (that is, its "external" form) in which it is embedded? Here an analogy with the hypostatic union of the two natures in Christ can be used. Indeed, it is because of the hypostatic union between the divine and the natural (human) in Christ that one can argue by analogy that the interplay between the space and time of the universe and its uncreated ground is also upheld hypostatically by God in the course of his "economy" in relation to the world. The fulfilment of this economy took place in the Incarnation when the link between the humanity of Christ (in space) and his divinity as the Logos (who is beyond space and yet holds all space together) was established. Thus the universe in its spatio-temporal extension manifests its Christologically evidenced hypostatic inherence in the Logos.

The Incarnation of the Logos of God in the flesh, which entails the annunciation of the Kingdom of God, brings the whole of humanity not only to the realization of its *microcosmic* function, but also to a knowledge of its *ecclesial* function in building the universal Church as the Body of Christ. Humanity is called by God to be the "priest of creation." Then the whole universe, having participated through its creation and the Incarnation in the hypostasis of the Logos, will be represented for human beings in the Holy Church. Maximus develops the analogy between Church and the universe in his *Mystagogy 2*, where he says that a certain "blessed old man" used to speak

> [...] of God's holy Church as a figure and image of the entire world composed of visible and invisible essences because like it, it contains both unity and diversity. For while it is one house in its construction it admits of a certain diversity in the disposition of its plan by being divided into [...] a sanctuary and [...] a nave. Still, it is one in its basic reality without being divided into its parts by reason of the differences between them, but rather by their relationship to the unity it frees these parts from the difference arising from their names. [...] In this way the entire world of beings produced by God in creation is divided into a spiritual world filled with intelligible and incorporeal essences and into this sensible and bodily world which is ingeniously woven together of many forms and natures. This is like another sort of Church not of human construction which is wisely revealed in this church which is humanly made, and it has for its sanctuary the higher world assigned to the powers above, and for its nave the lower world which is reserved to those who share the life of sense.

It is in this analogy that one sees again the cosmological meaning of the Incarnation: the whole Church represents the world, and it is Christ who is the head and the foundation of the Church. The universe, being mirrored in the Church, is held hypostatically by the Logos of God, who is the head of the universe understood as a Church. When we say that the universe inheres in the hypostasis of the Logos of God, we understand this primarily from the perspective of the universe's creation and its further articulation by human beings. When we say that the universe as the Church is held hypostatically by Christ, however, we understand this from the perspective of the Incarnation.

By relating humanity to Christ, whose hypostasis, after Pentecost, was transmitted to the Church, theology implicitly affirms the centrality of the Christ-event for our comprehension of how the knowledge of the universe as a whole (that is, as "all in all") is possible (see the discussion above). It also affirms the cosmological significance of this event for the universe as such, if knowledge of the universe is treated as part of the created universe. Then one can conjecture that the development of the universe has, theologically speaking, a drastically different meaning before the Incarnation of the Logos on Earth and after it. It was necessary for the universe to be in a state of constructive development in order to sustain life on Earth and to allow God to condescend to us and to assume human flesh in order to initiate the new stage of salvation history. This means that nature, as it existed before the Incarnation (being lost

in the sense, that it did not know its own Divine origin), was transfigured through the knowledge of its meaning and destiny which it received from man; for the acquisition of the ecclesial hypostasis through the building of the body of Christ leads human beings to the transfigured state, where the balance between their natural and hypostatic qualities should change in favor of the latter; the sustenance of the natural dimensions of human existence, which has been conditioned by cosmological conditions, ceases probably to function as the precondition of the fulfilment of the divine plan. This confirms our conjecture that the constructive development of the universe as evolving towards the conditions where human beings could exist had to take place only prior to the Incarnation. After the Incarnation, man, having realized its ecclesial standing, becomes fully responsible for the fate of the universe. Together with this theological argument, one can reassert that the universe in the future is not to be seen as anthropic in a physical sense, but its vision becomes more dependent on the condition of humankind. The matter of the salvation of the universe becomes an ecclesial activity of the transfiguration of nature and its unification back to God. Humanity then is not just a purpose of creation (that is, that which was asserted by some versions of the anthropic principle); it can only be understood in the context of the promise of God for its salvation as constituting the *locus* point of the meeting of God and His creation, as the mediating agency whose purpose is to bring the whole universe through its genuine knowledge to the new creation.

The wisdom of what we have just discussed is formed by what the Church is left with after the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, the wisdom which we know through the Church tradition and its ever experienced liturgical epiclesis. In the same way as that Christians experience through Liturgy an eschatological presence of Christ, the ecclesial wisdom in the knowledge of the universe through science discloses to men the presence of the hypostasis of Christ (although in its empirical absence) which implies at the same time the praising of the personal Creator of the universe. This wisdom reinstates the existing split between the ecclesial and scientific intentionality in studying the universe to their eucharistic unity, that is, unity in communion with God, revealing thus the work of cosmologists as a *para-eucharistic work.*

Conclusion: Transfiguration of the Universe through Deified Knowledge

Orthodox theology, by asserting a priestly role of humanity with respect to the whole creation, implies that the entire universe is to be transfigured by being brought back into union with God. What is the meaning of this assertion in view of the present-day perception of the actual infinity of the universe? Cosmology explicitly states that the physical universe is huge, to such an extent that humanity effectively sees the frozen image of its past reaching us through light travelling billions of years. The universe at large is causally disconnected, and most of its space will never be reached physically. In this sense, any analogy with the theologically asserted transfiguration of Earthly nature, which sometimes is invoked in the context of ecological concerns, has no sense. The language of "use" or "development" of nature, which needs humanity for its transfiguration, must be abandoned as irrelevant in application to the universe as a whole, if one aims to avoid the suspicion of producing pseudo-scientific mythology. When we speak of "en-hypostasiszing" the universe, we mean that the process has to do with humanity's quality as "hypostasis of the universe," more than with any activity. It is not a matter of "shaping" the universe into a human product, but of bringing it into a conscious relationship with God. And humanity does this through an understanding of the universe's meaning and apprehension of this meaning in its connection and unity with the primordial ground of the Logos. In other words, to grasp the meaning of the universe in the context of its unity means to reveal this unity as that which proceeds from God. Thus to understand the universe means to understand it through relationship with God. Correspondingly, such an understanding implies that its very process within the limits of the human nature is subjected to participation in the Divine activity. Maximus the Confessor anticipated such an understanding when he argued that the mind lacks the power to gain a "scientific" sense of reality because it does not grasp how the manifold of the universe is related to God. The issue of such a relationship is a longstanding theological problem and we do not discuss it here. The only thing we would like to mention is that in order to reconcile God's transcendence and His presence in the world, one usually makes a distinction between divine es-

sence and its activity: God differs radically according to essence and is identical according to activity. As we argued elsewhere, this subtle distinction in relationship can be expressed through the language of hypostatic inherence (obviously, it cannot be tracked on the level of the worldly causality) whose pointers can be detected through the study of the universe. The detection of the Divine presence in the world presupposes participation in the Divine which takes place on different levels of reality by understanding, intellection, sensibility, coordination in rubrics of space and time and other aspects of life. And to secure the transcendence of the Divine, such a participation implies a change not of human *nature*, but a *mode* of being, an acquisition of such a new hypostasis which would allow the natural cognitive faculties to function in a modified state when the vision of the universe in its extended spatiality and temporality is transformed towards its theogenic uniformity, that is, unity in God.

Since all talks about participation in the Divine make sense in the context of Christ being the ultimate archetype of this participation, it seems plausible to make an epistemological analogy with some of Christ's activities which manifested the presence of the Divine mode of being within his fully human nature. As an example, we consider His walking on the water, in analogy with T. Tollefsen's line of thought adjusting it for the purposes of our reasoning. To walk is a human activity; to walk on the liquid and fragile surface of water shows that there is a double activity involved, that is, the human walking and the Divine activity which enables Christ to actualize a mode of being which transcends that which pertains to His human nature. What is obvious here is that the divine activity penetrates into the human nature of Christ, but this nature is preserved in the sense that the *logos* of this nature is secured in God. What is changed is the "mode" of being, that is, the way in which human nature exists and executes its natural functions. The presence of this "mode" of being indicates that humanity of Christ participated in the Divine activity, thus being deified. Making an analogy with the case of knowledge of the universe one can say, on the one hand, that to think and see things in the universe in its *diastatic* display is also a human activity; on the other hand, if a human being involved in the study of the universe, exercising his ability to see and comprehend the visible universe, subjects himself to the actualization in him

of a mode of being which transcends his human nature, so that the divine activity penetrates his human nature while preserving it, he will be able to see the universe beyond that which is visible according to the capacity and delimiters originating from his created nature. He thinks the universe as a whole, but his thought transcends discursive reasoning in contemplating the universe as the unity held in Christ's "right hand" (Rev. 1:16). This analogy receives it justification in the fact that Christ, being fully human, must have been subjected to the vision of the universe in its unity with God through enhypostasizing his human nature by the Logos in the same way as the whole universe is inherent in Him.

In a way, to see the universe as the whole of creation, that is, to see it as an instant of the unconditional Divine Love with respect to the world, means to participate in the actually infinite mode of the Divine activity. To comprehend the universe as a whole, as "simultaneous" with the instant of the natural life, means to achieve the change of a *mode* of this life. Maximus describes this by saying that "such a one has no experience of what is present to it, and has become without beginning and end; he no longer bears within himself temporal life and his motions...." In this effectively deified condition, a human person acquires the vision of the universe through the "eyes" of the Logos Himself, for, according to Maximus, "he possesses the sole divine and eternal life of the indwelling Word..." With all this, human nature is preserved and not destroyed. What is changed is the *mode* of being through interpenetration by God when the whole universe is perceived as the saturating "all in all" of inexpressible communion with Love. It is through this love that "cosmic homelessness" (M. Heidegger and E. Fromm), "non-attunement with the universe" (J. F. Lyotard) and "alienation" from it (R. Ingarden) are overcome through love to that unconditional Love of Christ which is similar to the unconditional mother's love to her children impressed on them through the saturating givenness of her smile (H. U. von Balthasar). The universe becomes for us something greater and other than "only the universe," because the specific "worldly" character of the universe is overcome without the universe itself being "removed" or "eliminated." The meaninglessness of the universe, its pure factuality and impersonality, its indifference to the Divine truth, are also overcome. The universe is transfigured from within human contemplation and comprehension, but preserved in its naturalness. It is transfigured exactly to the extent

the human person relieves itself from the grief of living in it, when the sense of life in God and with God makes the entire rapidly expanding universe with myriads of scintillating stars no more than an instant of communion. The universe is transfigured because it is transcended. It is transcended, but not abandoned. It is transcended in the direction of the inside of a human person, that is towards strengthening and asserting that existence which is *free*, as much as possible, from the physical and biological, as well as social and historical, necessities.

Such a freedom of thinking of the universe proceeds from the freedom of human beings made in the image of God. And it is this image that becomes the "delimiter of free thinking" of the universe: all thoughts and articulations of the universe always contain in themselves the traces of the divine image. Even when cosmology proves the insignificance of humanity in the universe, the divine image remains exactly because human mind resists all attempts to be circumscribed by the rubrics of the natural, finite, and transient. Human beings attempt to understand the underlying sense of beings and things not according to their "nature" (which is unfolded in the sciences) but according to the final causes of these beings and things in relation to the place and goals of humanity in creation. This understanding cannot be explicated only through physics and biology. It is based in views on humanity as the crown of creation made in the image of God. And this is the reason why in a God-like fashion humanity wants to recognize all sorts of beings (either simple physical objects or living organisms) not according to their nature (as happens in scientific research) that is according to their compelling givenness, but as results of humanity's *free will*. The image of eternity as a different mode of being is retained in any cosmological theory created through free willing, even if this theory predicts the finitude of all actual forms of existence and life. Free thinking of the universe is thinking of the freedom of the incarnate human person, brought into being in the Divine image by the will of the Holy Spirit.

In conclusion, one may quote Maximus the Confessor's *Mystagogy*, where he characteristically confirms our thought that free thinking of the universe and an attempt to see it through the "eyes" of God corresponds to the ecclesial destiny of humanity of bringing creation back into union with God:

> [...] when the world, as man, will die to its life of appearances and rise again renewed of its oldness in the resurrection expected presently [...] the man who is ourselves will rise with the world as a part with the whole and the small with large, having obtained the power of not being subject to further corruption. Then the body will become like the soul and sensible things like intelligible things in dignity and glory, for the unique divine power will manifest itself in all things in a vivid and active presence proportioned to each one, and will by itself preserve unbroken for endless ages the bond of unity.

VI

Church, Death, Resurrection, Eschata

The Roots of the Church according to St Maximus the Confessor

Bishop Ignatije Midić

The question of the roots or origins of the Church, specifically, from where does the Church draws its existence, is not simply theoretical; that is to say, it is not only a matter for contemplative thinking but, above all, it is practical and vital. It is not only her identity dependent on where the roots of the Church are and from where it draws its existence, but also the methods of her historical establishment and manifestation. That is of absolute importance if the Church is the only place of salvation of creation from death. For the main problem of the past and also in the current generation lies in these questions: where is the Church?, in what manner can someone become a member of her? Also, what is the truth of the Church?, that is, what is her identity? On these depends on historical evaluation and the present time.

In this short paper we will ponder St Maximus' ecclesiology from the point of view of the Church's origins and her identity, meaning from where she derives her source or establishment and her historical existence. Where, then, are the roots of the Church according to St Maximus, and what are the consequences of her identity and historical existence?

1. From the viewpoint/perspective/position of where the Church draws her existence, St Maximus has two differentiating opinions/notions: a) Biblical and b) Origenistic, specifically a Greek standpoint.

a) The Biblical approach to this theme views the founding of the Church in events that surrounded the appearance of the Messiah—His Incarnation, suffering and Resurrection from the dead—and in the gathering of the people of Israel around Him. Based on the expecta-

tions of the Jewish people "in the last days," the Messiah would appear to the scattered people of Israel and gather them in one place and would thus inaugurate the Kingdom of Israel, that is, the Church. According to this, the Church as a historical community derives its existence from the occurrence of future events, the coming of the Messiah and of the assembly of the people of Israel around Him.

Based on this belief, the Church in its Old Testament history established itself in the event of Abraham's election and the blessing of the people of Israel through him. Specifically, the chosen people of God which were founded in the appearance of the patriarch Abraham signifies the historical manifestation of the Church, while in the eschaton it will be recapitulated in the Person of the Messiah.

The first Christians who were of Jewish origin definitely shared in the Old Testament notion of inheritance according to this ecclesiology, with the exception that they saw in Jesus of Nazareth and the events related Him as the Messiah, the Christ and the manifestation, or the arrival of the last days in history. Jesus Christ identified himself as the Messiah which the righteous of the Old Testament and the people of Israel through the prophets called the "Son of God" or "Son of Man." This is attested by Christ through His teachings but particularly in His life: his suffering and Resurrection from the dead. The early Christians who believed in Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah already believed that the "end of days" had begun with the arrival of the Messiah but especially through the appearance and activities of the Holy Spirit. "*In the last days it will be, God declares, that I pour out my Spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.*" (Acts 2:17) According to the Old Testament prophecies, the Holy Spirit ushers in the last days of history (cf. Joel. 3:1-5). The New Testament Church, therefore, as a community of apostles and faithful people of God around Jesus Christ is the embodiment and manifestation of the eschatological community of Israel around the Messiah. So, as viewed through biblical eyes, the beginning of the New Testament Church comes to fruition by the awaiting expectation and appearance of the Messiah and in the event of the of the Assembly of God's people around Him.

Centered on the event of Christ's Ascension and the promise of His imminent return to judge the world and to establish His Kingdom, the

New Testament writers understood that the true Church is located in the eschaton, the second coming of Christ, and in the assembling of all of the nations around Him, while the historical events surrounding Christ and His followers are only an icon and a foretaste of this last event.

While the Old Testament Israelites viewed the Messiah and the gathering of all of God's people around Him as the beginning of the Church, the Christians have added unification with Him, or the embodiment of all the members of the Church in His hypostasis.

Hence the manifestation of the New Testament Church throughout history was manifested through Baptism and through the eating of Christ's body in Holy Eucharist. This means that the manifestation of the Church through history, until Christ returns again, is identified with the Eucharist, which derives its existence from the eschatological event of the assembly of the people of God and union with the Messiah.

This is clearly testified by the New Testament writings, especially the Apostles John and Paul, as well as the post Apostolic Fathers and teachers of the Church, such as St. Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus of Lyons, the author of the writings of the "Didache," Cyprian of Carthage and others. For all of them, the Church is manifested in the Eucharist, which is a congregation of all the faithful in one place and union with Christ (σύναξις ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό), which reflects the final, eschatological congregation of all the faithful around the Lord Jesus Christ and union with Him, that is, the embodiment in Christ.

b) This understanding of the Church is drastically changed in the post-New Testament period of the third century onwards on the basis of Origen's teachings about the Church. Origen and some other teachers from the Catechetical School of Alexandria, as opposed to the scriptural approach to the Church, viewed pre-existing eternity as something outside of time and outside the historical community of spiritual beings with God. Specifically, according to Origen, the roots of the Church are not seen in the future as historic reunification of the people with the Messiah, but rather as something before history, that is, in the past as an eternal state of spiritual beings in God the Logos.

Origen, under the influence of Plato and Neo-Platonism, viewed the Church as a community of spiritual beings with God, the Logos which existed before the creation of the visible (i.e., material) world and before the Incarnation of the Word. *The logoi of beings* (οἱ λόγοι τῶν

ὄντων), as Origen named them, were the true beings, and they are found to be in an eternal union with God, the Logos, until they began to fall out of this community. As a consequence, God created the material world in which the spiritual beings were imprisoned as punishment due to their fall. The identity of the Church, her essence, according to Origen's view, is founded in the community of preexisting spiritual beings with God, the Logos.

As for the historical origin of the Church, she draws her existence and manner of form from the past and manifests herself in the undertaking of the liberation of spiritual beings from history and matter in order to restore and return to her original status. The Church, according to Origen's understanding, establishes itself in the ascetical mode of existence of people, meaning in the liberation of the soul from everything material in order for the restoration to the unity with God, the Logos. The process will finally come to completion and everything will be returned to its original state. With respect to Origen and his understanding of the origin of the Church, the identity of the Church, its essence lies is the union of the soul and spiritual beings with God, the Logos, while its historical manifestation lies in the liberation of the soul from all that is material and its reunification with God, the Logos . Origen's ecclesiology has found a lot of followers and gained ground among many teachers of the Church, especially in monastic circles.

These two approaches to the Church, Scriptural and Origenistic, are obviously radically different and opposed to each other.

a) The Biblical approach to the Church identifies itself with the assembly and union of the people of God, and also of all things, the material and the spiritual world, with the Incarnate God, the Logos, i.e., the historical Jesus Christ, which will be fully realized in the future, and its manifestation in the here and now is seen in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

b) The Origenistic approach sees the Church as a preexisting, eternal community of spiritual beings and human spirits with a clean, incorporeal Logos and, in that context, rejects matter and history and everything that is tied to them. As such, this approach sees the Church's manifestation and history in the ascetical life of the people and not in the Eucharist.

At the same time, the identification of the Church is with the eschatological assembly of all the faithful people around the Messiah and united with Him, which is iconically the Eucharist. This resulted in viewing the liturgical services and liturgical ranks such as the bishop (who was the head of the community) together with the priests, deacons, and the people, as the very manifestation of God (Christ), and anyone who wanted to be in communion with God could not achieve that in any way except in the Liturgy and in communion with the bishop and the rest of the Church members. In contrast, the Origenistic approach placed particular emphasis on the ascetic life and asceticism and in the fulfillment of God's commandments, which is where the followers of Origen saw the presence of God. The Liturgy and office-bearers of liturgical ranks were viewed by Origen and Origenists as irrelevant to salvation or, at best, something helpful and secondary to the life of the Church.

The consequences of these two different approaches to the Church and her expressions in history and the practical life of the Church were such that, at times, there appeared to be a conflict between bishops and monks, between the Church as a provider of eucharistic services (and her office bearers) and the monks and ascetics. The authority of bishops and other liturgical ranks that arose from the eschaton and the Church's manifestation being founded in the Liturgy was not respectfully observed in many monastic circles because members of these circles often believed authority in the church was rooted in asceticism and monastic life. The conflict between the liturgical orders, especially between bishops and monks, as well as the conflict between the Eucharist and of asceticism which is reflected throughout the whole life of the Church, is evident in the history of the Church and continues to this day.

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What is the essence of Maximus' understanding of where the roots of the Church are and how the Church is manifested in history in relation to the two fold ecclesiological approaches mentioned above?

2. Following the biblical, St Maximus sees the roots of the Church and her identity in the future, in the eschaton. Maximus' ecclesiology is of a cosmic nature. All beings, not just humans, are created with the goal to be united with God, the Logos, the Incarnate Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and to become the "Body of Christ." *The Logoi of*

beings (οἱ λόγοι τῶν ὄντων) are, according St Maximus' understanding, God's desire that all creatures are united with God; the *Logos* would in this way embody and become incarnate as Christ, while the creatures in Christ would become deified, and creatures would not lose their separateness from the divine nature of God Logos (cf. PG 91, 1069-1104). In a word, God created many creatures, and at the end He created man with the desire to be united with God, the Logos, and to become the "Body of Christ" without ceasing to be what they are by nature—created beings. Or as seen liturgically by St Maximus, God created the world from non-being into being in order for there to be a "cosmic liturgy." And for Maximus that is the truth behind all created beings that will be realized in the future, in the eschaton, for Christ showed this Himself with His own Incarnation. The current manifestation of the Church as an eschatological reality is iconic and is mirrored in the Holy Eucharist.

Following the biblical approach of the Church, St Maximus sees the Liturgy as icon of the final event. The Liturgy, according to St Maximus, is a revelation of the future Kingdom of God, a revelation of His desires and intentions in relation to the world and mankind. For St Maximus, the historical manifestation of the Church is reflected in Baptism and the Eucharist as a gathering around a bishop as around Christ and union with Him, and that is the icon of the future truth, the future of union of all with the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. *Mystagogy*). In this aspect, the ecclesiology of St Maximus is identical with the biblical ecclesiology of the early Fathers such as Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus of Lyons, Cyprian, and others.

However, St Maximus borrowed and integrated a lot from the ascetical and monastic traditions as he himself was a monk and tried theologically and then practically to incorporate this tradition into a biblical ecclesiology. What constitutes that incorporation of ascetical experience into liturgical ecclesiology? It happens first and foremost on a theological, theoretical plane, and then on a practical one.

We have already pointed out that in the understanding of St Maximus, God created everything with an aspiration to become the Body of Christ, that is, to be united with God and to become the Church, i.e., the Kingdom of God. More succinctly, God brought all from nonexistence into being to participate in the life of the Holy Trinity and

thus live forever. This was to be achieved through the Incarnation of God, the Logos, in a coordinated action of the Holy Spirit, that is, through the *Mystery of Christ*, as St Maximus called it.

God, however, did not want to realize this plan without the uninhibited compliance of His created beings. To this end, God nearing the end of Creation created man like Himself, that is, free, so that this union of all beings and creatures with God, the Logos, would be realized. It would be achieved freely by His created beings, and it would not be achieved solely by God's desire and activity but through their desire. In order to realize this idea and to accomplish this process freely, history was needed, that is, the realization of unity with God, the Logos, and the entire creation of nature through man. This includes, according to St Maximus, man's *podvig* (spiritual, ascetic struggle and feat, which involves discipline and sacrifice). Without *podvig*, no one can become a member and partaker of the Kingdom of God.

According to St Maximus, the first man was supposed to manifest his freedom, through a specific *mode of existence* in order to overcome the divisions among the created beings (which resulted from the fact of being created, not only from original sin) while safeguarding their diversity, and united them with God, the Logos.

Naturally, the essence of *podvig* for St Maximus is not reflected in man rejecting visible nature as something evil in itself, as was the case with the Origenistic ascetical tradition, but rather in seeking unity with God, the Logos.

Specifically, asceticism reflects the fact that one should not declare himself, or creation, as God and only unite himself with creation in order to live forever but should offer up creation to God and be united with Him, the Logos. In short, the essence of man's *podvig* is not to reject nature, i.e., matter, but rather to freely unite him and all creation with God in order for man, his body which is exemplified in creation, to live forever.

At the same time, *podvig* is a means by which this goal, i.e., union with Christ, is achieved and is not an end in itself. Because Christ, according to St Maximus, is identified with the final reality of the world with his truth, because for Christ, through Christ, and in Christ, God brought all the creatures from nonexistence into being. Otherwise *podvig* would make no sense. For this reason, *podvig* is something that leads

us to the Liturgy, according to St Maximus. Specifically, *podvig* builds the Church as a liturgical community around Christ and in Christ. The essence of *podvig* is in achieving a community of man with fellow man, with nature, and with God through the offering of his Creation while safeguarding its diversity. In this way, the eschatological truth, that is, the eschatological Christ, is manifested in history and is proclaimed through the Liturgy and as the Liturgy.

Through Baptism and the Liturgy, many are identified with Christ through communion with him in the Eucharist. No one can become a member of the future Kingdom of God without *podvigs* (i.e., without renouncing one's egoism) and without participation in the Eucharist.

In conclusion, what has arisen from this understanding of ecclesiology in terms of theology? What are the practical consequences of Maximus' ecclesiology in the historical life of the Church?

Maximus' ecclesiology is of great importance, especially in the theological sense, because it gives absolute prominence of history in the ontological sense. Without history, it is not possible to realize the original plan of God for creation, i.e., the achieving of the Kingdom of God. The future Kingdom of God, the future truth of the world and the Church does not exist otherwise than as a historical Eucharist. The Kingdom of God or the future true Church is not a parallel reality with her historical manifestation in the Liturgy; rather the Liturgy is an icon of the future truth of her existence. The future Kingdom is an event that has not yet been achieved but rather exists as an icon, as the Liturgy.

On the other side, the Liturgy as an icon of the future Kingdom will also receive ontological significance. Belonging to the Eucharist, which is the icon of the eschatological reality, is an absolute prerequisite for the eternal life of every living thing. The Church here and now throughout history has an iconic ontology. An icon is not just an image of a prototype, as was the belief of Origenists, rather the only presence of the prototype here and now in history. Without this interpretation, Maximus' Liturgy would only be a symbol or a theatrical play similar to the tragedies of antiquity and not the only presence of the future truth.

The future Kingdom of God is the criterion by which history is measured because it is the truth of existence. Also, the future Kingdom as truth, which is revealed to us through the Liturgy, and as the Liturgy becomes the prototype of the way of life for man and nature. At the same time, it means, in the practical sense, that the true asceticism of man constitutes the Liturgy, constitutes the community of many and the nature of Christ. It is through *podvig* that we renounce our fallen hypostasis, we renounce our egotism, we renounce our desires, and we are hypostasized (ἐνυπόστατος) in the hypostasis of Christ through the Liturgy.

From there we have the Liturgy—even though it is a community of many and different people and the nature—as a unique work of Christ. It is because the "hypostasis" of the Liturgy is the hypostasis of Christ. Specifically, a *podvig* that constitutes the Liturgy becomes a mode of existence to the Church's nature (τρόπος ὑπάρξεος), without which nature could not exist. In that mode of existence, man and nature are a *leitoourgia*, and it is similar to the divine mode of existence, that is, similar to the existence of the Holy Trinity which deifies creation.

Translated from Serbian by
Fr Sergei Veselinovich

The Views of St Maximus the Confessor on the Institutional Church

Andrew Louth

The subject of this brief paper—the institutional Church in the theology of St Maximus—is what I was asked to speak on, not a subject that I chose, or indeed would have chosen. Initially, I was puzzled. It does not seem to me that St Maximus reflected much at all on the institutional structures of the Church; the focus of his ecclesiology seems to me to lie elsewhere, principally in the liturgy and the symbolic structures it entails and through which it expresses itself.[1] That is a very rich theme, but—in my view—only very occasionally do the structures of the Church come into view. That is not to say that Maximus' views are theoretical; on the contrary, they are intensely practical, as we shall see, but he does not seem to me to investigate very closely the ways in which the institutional structures—the hierarchy of the Church or ways in which the Church is involved in the political structures of the society in which it exists— promote his very practical concerns. At the very beginning of the *Mystagogia*—the nearest thing to a prolonged meditation on the

[1] There is, therefore, little on Maximus' ecclesiology in the secondary literature. The chapter on ecclesiology in Jean-Claude Larchet, *Saint Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris, 2003), 198-210, is limited in scope and is largely a summary of his discussion of the more polemical issue of the Roman primacy in Maximus' writings found in idem, *Maxime le Confesseur, médiateur entre l'Orient et l'Occident* (Paris, 1998), 125-201. There are useful discussions in the following: Alain Riou, *Le Monde et l'Église selon Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris, 1973), esp. 123-200; Nikos Matsoukas, *Kosmos, Anthropos, Koinonia kata ton Maximo Homologiti* (Athens, 1980), esp. 219-52 (largely expository); Nikolaos Loudovikos, *I Eucharistiaki Ontologia* (Athens, 1992), 251-72 (a sophisticated development of "eucharistic ecclesiology"). An older, but still useful, discussion of the *Mystagogia* (largely concerned with the information it gives about the celebration of the liturgy) can be found in Réné Bornert, *Les commentaires byzantins de la divine liturgie du VIIe au XVe siècle* (Paris, 1966), pp. 83–124.

Church in Maximus' writings—he expounds the way in which the role and purpose of the Church is modeled on the activity of God himself and finds this exemplified in the apostolic community as depicted in the *Acts of the Apostles*:

> It is in this way that the holy Church of God will be shown to be active among us in the same way as God, as an image reflects its archetype. For many and of nearly boundless number are the men, women and children who are distinct from one another and vastly different by birth and appearance, by race and language, by way of life and age, by opinions and skills, by manners and customs, by pursuits and studies, and still again by reputation, fortune, characteristics and habits: all are born into the Church and through it are reborn and recreated in the Spirit. To all in equal measures it gives and bestows one divine form and designation: to be Christ's and to bear his name. In accordance with faith it gives to all a single, simple, whole and indivisible condition which does not allow us to bring to mind the existence of the myriads of differences among them, even if they do exist, through the universal relationship and union of all things with it. It is through it that absolutely no one at all is in himself separated from the community since everyone converges with all the rest and joins together with them by the one, simple, and indivisible grace and power of faith. "For all," it is said, "had but one heart and one mind."[2] Thus to be and to appear as one body formed of different members is really worthy of Christ himself, our true head, in whom says the divine Apostle, "there is neither male nor female, neither Jew nor Greek, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, neither barbarian nor Scythian, neither slave nor free, but he is all and in all."[3] It is he who encloses in himself all beings by the unique, simple and infinitely wise power of his goodness.[4]

But how does this vision express itself in the institutional structures of the Church? There is not very much on this in his writings, but if we look at the Confessor's life, there are two occasions on which Maximus found himself involved in the structures of the Church. The first occasion was his appeal to Rome in the context of the Monothelite controversy and his participation in the Lateran Synod of 649. On that

[2] Acts 4:32.

[3] Col. 3: 11.

[4] *Myst.* 1, ll. 163–89 (ed. Christian Boudignon, CCSG 69, 2011).

occasion he appealed to the hierarchical structure of the Church in the person of Pope Martin to support Orthodoxy and oppose heresy. There are fragments of letters by Maximus, preserved in Latin by Anastasius the Librarian in the ninth century, that express something of his attitude to the Church of Rome in the wake of the Lateran Synod. The first fragment I shall cite, found in Maximus' works as *Opusc.* 11, asserts:

> All the ends of the inhabited world, and those who anywhere on earth confess the Lord with a pure and orthodox faith, look directly to the most holy Church of the Romans and her confession and faith as to a sun of eternal light, receiving from her the radiant beam of the patristic and holy doctrines, just as the holy six synods,[5] inspired and sacred, purely and with all devotion set them forth, uttering most clearly the symbol of faith. For, from the time of the descent to us of the incarnate Word of God, all the Churches of the Christians everywhere have held and possess this most great Church as the sole base and foundation, since, according to the very promise of the Saviour, it will never be overpowered by the gates of hell, but rather has the keys of the orthodox faith and confession in him, and to those who approach it with reverence it opens the genuine and unique piety, but shuts and stops every heretical mouth that speaks utter wickedness. For that which the creator of everything himself, our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, established and built up—together with his disciples and apostles, and the holy fathers and teachers and martyrs who came after—have been consecrated by their own works and words, by their sufferings and sweat, by their labours and blood, and finally by their remarkable deaths for the sake of the Catholic and Apostolic Church of us who believe in him, they, through two words,[6] uttered without pain or death—O the long-suffering and forbearance of God!—are eager to dissolve and to set at naught the great, all-illumining and all-praised mystery of the orthodox worship of the Christians.[7]

[5] The first five Ecumenical synods, together with the Lateran synod; the same list of six synods is to be found in Theodore Spoudaios' *Hypomnesticon*, his summary of the sufferings of Martin and Maximus (*Hypomnesticon* 8, in Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil, edd., *Maximus the Confessor and his Companions. Documents from Exile*, Oxford Early Christian Texts, 2002, 160).

[6] These "two words" must refer in some way to the imperial edicts (the *Ekthesis* of 638 and the *Typos* of 648) that promoted Monothelitism and forbade any discussion of Orthodox dyothelitism.

[7] *Opusc.* 11 (PG 91.137C–139B).

Maximus' letter celebrates the faithfulness of the Church of Rome to orthodoxy, and links this with the words of our Lord in Matthew 16:18–19. It is, however, about the *church* of Rome that he is speaking, not the bishop of Rome as such, and he emphasizes that the faith signally endorsed by Rome is founded on the apostles and their successors, the fathers and the synods where they declared their faith, that it has been tried in the suffering of their lives, both the suffering of those who endured persecution and martyrdom, and also those who shone forth in the ascetic life.[8] These words make it clear that the institutional structures of the Church, expressed in the hierarchy of the Church and synodical convocations, were important for Maximus; it is, however, interesting to note that Maximus places these institutional structures alongside the martyrs and confessors who have suffered for the faith—the institutional structures do not stand alone.

These fragments—*Opusc.* 10, 11, 12—only exist because they were preserved and translated by Anastasius the Librarian into Latin, as part of a dossier drawing on the events of the mid-seventh century to support exalted claims about the Roman See being made by Popes Nicholas I and Hadrian II in the mid-ninth century. *Opusc.* 12 speaks in similar terms to *Opusc.* 11 of "the apostolic see, which, from the incarnate Word of God himself, as well as, in accordance with the holy canons and definitions, from all the holy synods of all the holy Churches of God, which are in all the world, has derived and possesses dominion (*imperium*), authority and power to bind and loose."[9] This letter was written a few years earlier, and was concerned with what process must be adopted by the one-time monothelite patriarch of Constantinople, Pyrrhos, if he wished to be received back as Orthodox. Maximus insisted that he needed to convince the pope of Rome, doubtless because in the hierarchy of the Church, it was only the pope who was senior to the patriarch. It is most likely for this reason that, in contrast with *opusc.* 11, *opusc.* 12 speaks directly of the *sanctissimae Romanorum Ecclesiae beatissimum papam*.[10]

[8] For more detail, see the article of Larchet's referred to above.

[9] *Opusc.* 12 (PG 91.144C). On Anastasius Bibliothecarius, see, most recently, Bronwen Neil, *Seventh-Century Popes and Martyrs. The Political Hagiography of Anastasius Bibliothecarius*, Studia Antiqua Australiensia 2 (Turnhout, 2006).

[10] Ibid.

Maximus' enthusiastic celebration of the orthodoxy of the pope and Church of Rome has, not unnaturally, often been taken as evidence of a much warmer attitude to the Church of Rome, and the notion of papal primacy, than has been customary in the Byzantine East. His words, however, need to be set in their historical context. From 645, and probably earlier, until the accession of Pope Vitalian to the see of Rome in 657, Rome seemed to Maximus a beacon of Orthodoxy in a world darkened by heresy; alone among the patriarchal sees, Rome condemned the heresies of Monenergism and Monothelitism, signally under Pope Martin at the Lateran Synod of 649. During this period, Maximus' convictions led him to be strongly supportive of the Church of Rome. Even Pope Honorius was defended by Maximus, who interpreted his assertion of one will in Christ as a denial not of his human will, but rather of their being two contradictory wills in Christ[11]—not the view taken by the Fathers of the Sixth Ecumenical Synod in 681.[12] What Maximus says on the orthodoxy of the Church of Rome needs to be seen in this context. It is also important to note what Maximus does *not* say. What he says refers to the *Church* of Rome, not to the pope as such. Furthermore, there is no suggestion that the Church of Rome does anything more than support the faith of the whole Church, "in accordance with the holy canons and definitions, from all the holy synods of all the holy Churches of God, which are in all the world." This is a long way from the claim of such as Pope Nicholas I, in a letter to the Byzantine Emperor Michael III, possibly composed by Anastasius the Librarian himself, that "these privileges given to this holy Church [i.e., Rome] by Christ, not given by synods, but only celebrated and venerated by them, constrain and compel us 'to have solicitude for all the churches of God'."[13]

The other occasion on which Maximus found himself caught up in the institutional structures of the Church is found in the events that followed on the Lateran Synod—Maximus' arrest, his two trials, his exiles

[11] *Opusc.* 20 (PG 91.237C–245A).

[12] See the *Ekthesis* of Constantinople III, in Norman P. Tanner, SJ, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (London, 1990), I, p. 125.

[13] Nicholas, *Letter to Michael the Emperor*, conveniently excerpted in Denzinger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum, Definitionum et Declarationum*, ed. 36 (Rome, 1976), §§ 638, 640.

and his death (which could well be described in the terms he used of the deaths of the fathers in *opusc.* 11: "finally... their remarkable deaths"). Here we see how Maximus' ecclesiology was worked out in practice. The Church is founded on the confession of Christ: to be a member of the Church is "to be Christ's and to bear his name," in the phrase from the *Mystagogia* already quoted. For Maximus, such confession is crucial, and entails accepting the confession of Christ that we have received from the Apostles and the Fathers of the Church. So in his trial, Maximus responds to the accusation that he has split the Church by his stubbornness with the words: "if the one who states what is in Scripture and the holy Fathers splits the Church, what does someone do to the Church who annuls the teachings of the saints, without which the Church's very existence is impossible?"[14] Later on, when asked about his own teaching, he retorts: "I don't have a teaching of my own, but the common one of the Catholic Church. I mean that I haven't initiated any expression at all that could be called my own teaching."[15] At his trial he was pressed on the fact that he was not in communion with the throne of Constantinople, something of utmost importance to Maximus, since his ecclesiology, as I have argued elsewhere,[16] is grounded in eucharistic communion. But such communion, for Maximus, is only genuine communion if it is communion in the *truth*. So he explains his not being in communion with Constantinople by reciting the ways in which the patriarch has rejected the faith defined by the "holy synods"—by accepting the initial compromise at Alexandria in 633 and then accepting, indeed formulating, the imperial compromises of the *Ekthesis* and the *Typos*.[17]

Another issue raised at his trial concerning the institutional structures of the Church was the claim on the emperor's behalf that he was a priest, a claim again made by the iconoclast emperors in the next century. Maximus' rejection of this claim is outright; in response to the claim that "every Christian emperor [is] also a priest," he declares:

[14] *Relatio motionis* 4 (Allen-Neil, 58).

[15] Ibid. 6 (Allen-Neil, 60).

[16] See my articles, "The Ecclesiology of Saint Maximos the Confessor", *International Journal of the Study of the Christian Church* 4 (2004), 109-20; "Eucharist and Church according to St Maximos the Confessor", in *Einheit und Katholizität der Kirche*, ed. Theresia Hainthaler, Franz Mali, Gregor Emmenegger, Pro Oriente XXXII, Wiener Patristische Tagungen IV (Innsbruck-Vienna, 2009), 319–30.

[17] *Relatio motionis* 6 (Allen-Neil, 60).

> No, he isn't, because he neither stands beside the altar, and after the consecration of the bread elevates it with the words, *The holy things for the holy*; nor does he baptize, nor perform the rite of anointing, nor does he ordain and make bishops and presbyters and deacons; nor does he anoint churches, nor does he bear the symbols of the priesthood, the *omophorion* and the Gospel book, [as he bears the symbols] of imperial office, the crown and the purple.[18]

It is interesting to note that the argument is in terms of liturgical function, though the matter is political. In the dispute that took place during his first exile at Bizya with a Bishop Theodosius, whose task was to work a change of mind in Maximus, Maximus spells out one implication of the emperor's not sharing in the priestly office: namely, that the validity of an ecclesiastical synod does not depend on the emperor's ratification. The confessor lists seven synods, called by emperors, which proved heretical.[19]

Clearly, for Maximus, the Church, as defined by the true confession of faith celebrated in the Divine Liturgy of the Eucharist, is a sovereign body with its own institutions. However, deeply bound up with the Christian empire it might be, it may not be confused with it. A precious document for Maximus' understanding of the institutional Church is the last writing we have from his hand, a short letter written on 19 April 658 to Anastasios, his disciple and spiritual child of by then forty years' standing, who was exiled apart from his master.[20] Now Maximus and his few followers are on their own, Rome, in the person of Pope Vitalian, having succumbed to imperial pressure and entered into communion with the other patriarchal sees. In reply to the question—or taunt—"What Church do you belong to? Constantinople? Rome? Antioch? Alexandria? Jerusalem? See, all of them are united, together with the provinces subject to them," Maximus says he had replied, "The God of all pronounced that the Catholic Church was the correct and saving confession of the faith in him when he called Peter blessed because of the terms in which he had made proper confession of him." The Petrine foundation of the Church is Peter's faith, which even his successor can abandon, as Maximus had just learnt. At the end of the letter, there is a

[18] Ibid. 4 (Allen-Neil, 56).

[19] *Disputatio* 4 (Allen-Neil, 88).

[20] The letter can be found in Allen-Neil, 120-3.

postscript from Anastasius himself, saying that this letter, and the rest of the dossier, had been transcribed

> to make them known to you most holy people, in order that, when you have found out about the trial from these, you might all bring a common prayer to the Lord on behalf of our common mother, that is the Catholic Church, and on behalf of us your unworthy servants, for strengthening everyone and us also, persevering with you in it, according to the orthodox faith rightly preached in it by the holy Fathers.[21]

So what conclusions are we to draw about the place of institutional authority in the Church according to St Maximus the Confessor? There is no question that Maximus regarded the institutional structures of the Church as important: his involvement with Pope Martin in calling the Lateran Synod in 649 is evidence for this. It is clear, too, that, despite the fact that all the so-called Ecumenical Synods were called by emperors, Maximus did not regard the role of the emperor as essential. Unlike most Byzantine churchmen he regarded the Church as sovereign in the affairs of the faith: it was the role of the emperor to defend the faith of the Church, but not to define it—that role belonged to the priesthood, residing primarily in the bishops. St Maximus had, however, to face the most difficult of circumstances: a situation in which authentic synodical authority, as he interpreted it, had been laid aside by the supreme hierarchs of the Church, even the pope of Rome. The principal witness here is the letter we have just discussed. In the appendix to that letter, which seems not to be by Maximus and may have been written later, there is a reference to "the seed of piety at least in older Rome." However, in the letter itself, Maximus does not repudiate the assertion that Rome has capitulated. The truth is that the pope, both earlier in the person of Eugene I and then in the person of Vitalian, wobbled, though not irrevocably, but Maximus cannot have known this. And during Maximus' lifetime, it looked as if Vitalian had capitulated to the emperor. The interpretation most favorable to Rome that can be put on this letter, and its appendix, seems to me that its purpose was to stir up the people of Rome to prayer in the hope that the pope

[21] *Ep. Maximi ad Anastasium* (Allen-Neil, 122–3).

would eventually stand firm.[22] One could argue that this prayer was answered. But Maximus could not have known that and had to accept that, like Athanasius before him, he was standing virtually alone *contra mundum*. It seems to me that his understanding of the place of the institutional Church is not undermined by this, for he had always placed alongside the hierarchical structures of the Church—which had their role—the witness of the martyrs and confessors, to whose ranks he was willing to be enlisted. He may well have thought that, in the end, the truth would find synodical support and may well have thought that Rome and its pope would play a central role in this final victory for the true faith, but in his lifetime this could only be a matter of hope and prayer—which should not be underestimated.

[22] This suggestion was put to me after the conference by Adam Cooper and, with the qualifications expressed above, I find myself in agreement with him.

Death, Resurrection, and the Church in St Maximus' Theology

Bishop Maxim Vasiljević

Saint Maximus the Confessor occupies a very particular place within the patristic tradition, *mostly* because he bears witness to the ultimate value—and triumph—of life, i.e., to an ontology rooted in the Eschata. Looking at Maximus' works in the context of their own intentionality and purview, it becomes evident that life, life incorruptible and true, preoccupies his existential focus. It is precisely for this reason that he might be of great help today, since—as we see vividly in our time—prevailing ethical, aesthetical, ascetical, and other notions become very *relativistic* unless they are linked to ontology (and Maximus does connect them to ontology, as it is clear that his ascesis is colored with paschal, or ontological, themes and terms),[1] while the unavoidable problem of death is universal. In the final analysis, what really concerns man is not whether or not he will be virtuous, nice, or contemplative, but whether or not he will exist eternally, in communion with his Creator, as a whole *person* in the communion of life. Likewise, the "eternal life" is not about feeling either pleased or displeased but about a participation by grace in its deepest ontological content.

Ontology vs. Thanatology

It is out of this concern that Maximus, already in his early writings dated 620, gives an articulate and unambiguous definition of life and death:

[1] Cf. *Amb* 47, PG 91, 1360-1361A. Here, commenting on St Gregory's *Oration on Pascha* (45, 14; PG 36:641CD), is applied the paschal terminology that leaves no doubt where the ascesis aims, having the Resurrection of the mortal existence as its final goal.

> Separation from God is, properly (κυρίως), death, and *sin the sting of death* [1 Cor. 15:56]. In consenting to it Adam at the same time became exiled [distanced] from the tree of life, from Paradise and from God; *of necessity bodily death followed after*. He who says *I am life* [Christ; Jn 14:6] is properly life. He in His death led back to life him [Adam] who had been made dead.[2]

In this simple truth—that separation from God is death and that life is the presence of the Other—we meet our first, yet enduring, *aporia*. How can this incorruptible life be gained if, according to St Maximus, between God and creation there is a real gulf (ἄβυσσος, χάσμα, or ῥήγμα)? No doubt, man's incorruptibility was *conditional*, since he had received "the gift of immortality, which is maintained perpetually through *participation* in life."[3] But, how are we to understand this "participation," which has had many meanings attributed to it since Plato? It prompts more than one question: What does it mean to exist, without any other defining characteristic? Where are the causes of death, in nature or will?[4] Why, although Maximus accepts the immortality of the soul, is he *not satisfied* with it as a solution to the problem of death? Why is the body so crucial for St Maximus' concept of the human being despite its dissolution upon death? What does hell, in which Maximus obviously believes, consist of? What is Maximus' key ontological position?

We must admit that there is no single approach to the above questions. As St Maximus holds, "every syllable of divine scripture is capable of being interpreted in multifarious ways (πολυτρόπως)."[5] However, though there may be many approaches, there is one key, and that is the *ontological* realism of the Confessor. This realism is based on the following premises.

[2] *Carit.* II, 93. (Italics are, naturally, mine)

[3] *Amb* 10, 60, PG 91, 1156D. As Thunberg points out, "life is gained through participation in life, and death through the removal of life" (*Microcosm and Mediator, The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor,* Lund: 1965 , p. 174).

[4] In *Amb* 7, Maximus says that the death has entered by our free will (PG 91, 1076AB). Fr D. Stăniloae in his commentary to this passage (*The Μυσταγωγία of Saint Maximus the Confessor* [ed. By Apostolike Diakonia of the Church of Greece], 1973, pp. 144[in Greek]) says that death has entered into existence because of our nature, since our being had prepared itself for death by the penetration of corruptibility into our nature.

[5] *QThal.* 47 (CCSG 315,63-317,65), quoted in P. Blowers, *Exegesis and Spiritual Pedagogy in Maximus the Confessor: An Investigation of the* Quaestiones ad Thalassium (Notre Dame, 1991), p. 72.

First, the life we live is not truly life if it is deprived of He who said, "I am the life" (Jn 14:6). Ontology in Christ ultimately defeats thanatology.[6] Second, reality and truth do not coincide in creation. Indeed, how can the being of the world be "real" when it resides in divisions? "Division," an important concept in Maximus' thought that we are going to explore later, denotes fragmentation and separation.[7] The Fall lies in the fact that man did not succeed in removing the ontological dichotomies within the nature of beings.

This fact has become extremely important nowadays in the light of so-called "thanatology," in which death is studied through psychology and sociology. St Maximus is opposed to such a phenomenology that avoids the nature of death in favor of focusing solely on the problem of "suffering."[8] He regards death as the last enemy that needs to be destroyed, which did in fact take place with Christ's Resurrection. By relating Christ's triumph over death to personal freedom (and his mode, the "tropos"), Maximus anticipates humanity's *mortification* of death when it submits the entire self-determining will to God. Therefore, the concept of death in Maximus has a strongly *personal* character (related to the "mode") that inevitably entails the involvement of *agape* and the *voluntary* death of one's self.

Let us look at the problem of death by clarifying several concepts and notions in Maximus' thought. The first text is found in Maximus' *Amb.* 42, where he asserts:

> For all beings that exist by essence or will exist, or have become or will become, or have been manifested or will be manifested, have their preexistent *logoi* firmly in God, and by these all that exists has come into being and remains eternally, in accordance with their intention. Through their natural movement and by the inclination and extent of their *free election*, existent things draw near and cling to being: the acceptable through virtue and through steady progress to-

[6] *Carit.* II, 96, transl. Sherwood, p. 172.

[7] "The existing difference (διαφορά) within creation since God's fashioning is not necessarily a division (διαίρεσις), but human ignorance brought into association difference with division (=separation, which, in actuality, came about only with the Fall). Maximus just as well here employs a Christological language which distinguishes between διαφορά and διαίρεσις (=the difference of nature from its own division)" (A. Jevtic in: *Sveti Maksim Ispovednik, Zivot i izbor iz Dela sa sholijama i propratnim studijama*, Vrnjci-Trebinje-Los Angeles 2012, p. 237.

[8] Actually, Maximus later says that Christ has changed the use of death by suffering (ἀνέτρεψε τὴν χρῆσιν τοῦ θανάτου, *QThal.* 61, PG 90, 633A), but he does not stop there. See our further comments related to this.

> ward the *logos* of their existence, the unacceptable through evil through motion away from the *logos* of their existence. To put it concisely, a state that either consists of the possession or of the deprivation of the natural power to *participate* in the One Who is by nature completely imparticipable, but Who through His infinite goodness offers Himself generally to all *by grace*, both to those worthy and unworthy, and makes residence in eternal existence available, according to the disposition of each being. Participation or non-participation in beings is analogous to primary *being, well-being,* and *eternal well-being*. There will be commensurate participation or non-participation: punishment for those unable to participate, and intensification and growth of enjoyment for those who are able to do so.[9]

There is no doubt that for Maximus, the *triple* participation or "non-participation" in *being, well-being, and eternal being* is equivalent to man's union with God or his separation from God. In *Amb.* 10, 12, Maximus explains that there are three general modes accessible to human beings, modes by which God created all things, for He endowed us with substance and existence so that we might have *being, well-being*, and *eternal well-being*. The two extremes (i.e., being and eternal well-being) belong solely to God, who is their author. But the intermediate mode (well-being) depends on our free inclination and effort, and through it the extremes are properly said to be what they are, for if the middle term were absent, their designation would be meaningless, because the good (i.e., well-being) would not be present in their midst. Maximus concludes that apart from their eternal movement toward God, there is no other way for the Saints "to possess and preserve the truth of the extremes, which is assured only when well-being is mixed in the middle of them."[10]

Maximus uses Genesis' explicit commentary on life and death (2:17: "when you eat from it you will certainly die") in order to examine the meaning of existence. He distinguishes between the trees, "since one

[9] *Amb.* 42, PG 91, 1329AB. (Translations of *Ambigua* in this study are taken, with gratitude, from Maximos (Constas) of Simonopetra, *The Ambigua of Maximos the Confessor* (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library; Harvard University Press, forthcoming). At the conclusion of this study, we found the two very insightful studies on the subject of hell in St Maximus' thought: John Zizioulas, "Eschatology and Existence", *Synaxis* n. 121/2012, pp. 43-72 (in Greek) and Atanasije Jevtic, "A Comment on the Commentaries of St Maximus on Man's State in the Future Age", *Synaxis* n. 122/2012, pp. 4-29 (in Greek).

[10] *Amb.* 10, 12, PG 91, 1116B.

is the tree of life, and the other must be of non-life, the death-giving tree."[11] Yet, his explanation is ontological-epistemological, and not purely ethical. On account of the Genesis narrative, he describes the progression of death in bio-cycle.[12] "Even though he had been told that *it [the eating] was bound up with death*," Adam "set in motion the whole *cycle of bodily nourishment*, thereby *exchanging life for death*, and giving life to his own death for the whole *temporal duration* of the present age." Utterly self-centered, the first man believed that "the very activity of eating... would support life," and thereby introduced individualism as a means of *self*-preservation (emphasis is on "self"). That is how "*death found the opportunity to flourish*, both in him and for us."[13] Time has acquired a divisive property, separating beings and creating "space" (division) between them, which equals corruption and death.

As a consequence, creation as *chorochronos* (time-space) is bound up with death and corruption.[14] So a sort of participation is necessary for beings to exist. But this is not all that we could say about being. As we just have seen, Maximus has for our theme some very profound and significant distinctions about the *participative*, i.e., personal, side of God's existence. He asserts that not-being is privation of being, of *participated true Being*[15] (this will be of crucial significance for understanding life after *Parousia*, characterized as united life in the mode of the Uncreated[16]).

The language of Maximus here is wholly *existential*, going, as it does, beyond an ethical understanding of transgression. The first man, as an embodied creature bounded by space and time with an instinctive urge for self-preservation, "embarked upon a different life which engenders death," so that "he *handed over all creation as food for death*." As a consequence, in the present situation, "*we ourselves never really know life*, being

[11] *QThal.* 43, PG 90, 412B). See Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, p. 176.

[12] "The scandal of *evil* for the human mind is the given mode as a whole of the geological process or of the food chain, a mode that puts the death of rational and irrational animate beings on the same level without distinguishing between them" (Ch. Yannaras, *The Enigma of Evil*, Holy Cross Orthodox Press 2012, p. 117).

[13] *Amb* 10,60, PG 91, 1056D.

[14] *Amb* 10, 18, PG 91, 1120B.

[15] *Carit.* III, 29, PG 90, 1025C.

[16] "For in that state nothing will appear apart from God (οὔτε γὰρ ἔσται τι ἐκτὸς Θεοῦ), nor will there be anything opposed to God (Θεῷ ἀντισηκοῦσθαι δοκοῦν) that could entice our will to desire it (ἵνα τινὸς ἔφεσιν πρὸς αὐτὸ ῥέψαι δελεάσῃ)" (*Amb* 7, 12, PG 91, 1077A).

ceaselessly devoured by death through corruption."[17] In *Amb* 7, 32 Maximus connects humanity's "condemnation" to death to the aim to reawaken capacity for love, so that "*by experiencing pain* we might learn that *we have fallen in love with what is not real* (τοῦ μηδενὸς ἐρῶντες)," instead of loving the Existing one (πρὸς τὸ ὄν).[18]

Such a predicament of existential insufficiency cannot be overcome through *contemplation* or *morality*. We are obliged to identify that in St Maximus' thought the gap between God and creation—being in itself an immense problem—has been filled principally through *hypostatic ontology*.[19] This *hypostatic ontology*, which is perhaps St Maximus' most important contribution to theology, is determined by his attempt to synthesize all of these inherited approaches to salvation. The relation of God to the world for him is not "ethical" or "psychological;" it is nothing other than *ontological*. When one is "initiated into the inexpressible power of the Resurrection,"[20] he *undergoes* things divine ("by participation") rather than contemplating them ("by awareness"). For this reason, by contrasting the terms "participation" and "awareness," St Maximus indicates that God, eternal life, and well-being can be "known," but, sadly, not experienced or shared existentially.[21] What a woeful destiny!

In lieu of fulfilling the magnificent goal of uniting the divided things "through love,"[22] the first man "used the power bestowed upon him for that purpose to deepen the division."[23] Now, a delusion of life

[17] *Amb* 10, 28, PG 91, 1157A. Transl. Fr Maximos of Simonopetra.

[18] "And so God *punished with death* precisely that *element* within us by means of which *we destroyed our power to love* with our whole mind, which we owed to Him alone. The aim was that, *by experiencing pain* we might learn that *we have fallen in love with what is not real*, and so be taught to redirect our power to what really exists (πρὸς τὸ ὄν)" (*Amb* 7, 32, PG 91, 1093A).

[19] "τὴν φύσιν ἐνδύεται τὴν ἡμετέραν, ἑνώσας ταύτην ἀτρέπτως ἑαυτῷ καθ' ὑπόστασιν" (*Ep.* 2, PG 91, 404B).

[20] *Cap. theol.* 1.66, PG 90, 1108AB.

[21] In *QD.* (PG 90, 796B) we find an important epistemological distinction between those who in their encounter with God only have "awareness" of the good (i.e., of God) ("by awareness, not by participation") and those who have "participation" in the good. In *QThal.* 60, Maximus will clarify that "the logos recognizes that knowledge of divine things is two-fold: *relative* knowledge...found only in reason and in the intellections...and *real* knowledge found only in active experience, apart from reason and intellections" (*QThal.* 60, PG 90, 621CD).

[22] *Amb* 41, 5, PG 1308B.

[23] Loudovikos, *A Eucharistic Ontology*, p. 134. Therefore, would it be naïve to hold that Adam is the one who introduced death into "creaturehood," because he in advance had been warned that "that fruit [eating of the forbidden tree] and death went together"?

is maintained through a creature's self-confidence that the "real" life is the *true* life, and Adam was deluded exactly by confusing the actual state (with its visible and hidden attractions) with the anticipated state.

The Division (διαίρεσις) as Survival of Death

When an "absurd aspiration toward non-being"[24] takes the place of man's "natural" development, as it did during the Fall, the created, "contingent," and conditional being becomes almost completely "darkened" in his essential movements. Man protects himself from the radiation of the truth of Life and subjugates his own nature to the necessity of a whirlpool of movements. In that case, the "last enemy" (1 Cor. 15:26) *disintegrates* and divides beings, thereby generating fear of the other through self-love and individualism, thereby creating a disordered ontology.

According to Zizioulas, "death exists because communion and otherness cannot coincide in creation."[25] This assertion is rooted in Maximus' usage of the terms *distinction* and *division*. "Different beings become distant beings: because difference becomes division, distinction becomes distance."[26] Distance is the chief impediment to human progress.[27] Such separation corresponds to what St Maximus says in a brilliant analysis of a principle that he applies to the entire reality:

> Difference, on the one hand, is a *logos* according to which the substrata differ one from another, and is indicative of πῶς εἶναι... Division, on the other hand, is a cut right through which entirely severs the substrata and renders them to be ... separate from one another.[28]

[24] πρὸς τὸ μὴ ὄν παραλόγως φέρεται (*Amb.* 7,23, PG 91:1084D). According to Maximus' theology, there is a changing, reverberating, and nihilistic tendency intrinsic to the very essence of created beings. Cf. N. Matsoukas, *World, Man, Communion according to St Maximus the Confessor*, Athens, 1980, p. 52. (in Greek)

[25] *Communion and Otherness*, p. 3.

[26] *Communion and Otherness*, p. 3. He also significantly points out: "Mortality is tied up with createdness out of nothing, and it is this that the rejection of the Other—God—and of the other in any sense amounts to. By turning difference into division through the rejection of the other, we die. Hell, eternal death, is nothing but isolation from the other, as the desert Fathers put it" (ibid.).

[27] "With its full development and a perfect system of wireless transmission of the energy to any distance man will be able to solve all the problems of material existence. Distance, which is the chief impediment to human progress, will be completely annihilated in thought, word and action. Humanity will be united, wars will be made impossible and peace will reign supreme" (N. Tesla, 1900, as quoted in "Great Scientist, Forgotten Genius, Nikola Tesla", by Chris Bird and Oliver Nichelson, *New Age* 21, Feb. 1977, p. 42).

[28] *Ep.* 12; PG 91, 469AB.

The purpose of the first man was, in fact, to overcome such divisions. St Maximus insists that in order to achieve the communion of man and created nature with God, the man had to begin by realizing the communion between male and female. We have to admit that this goal was unachievable by man's own power in any case.[29] It would have required an *ekstasis* from man's side toward the Uncreated, but this did not occur; instead, man turned his focus inward. The referential *ekstatic* self-transcendence, woefully, became a turn to self-sufficiency, which means, self-love. Adam's self-love became both a symptom and the bearer of death.

A careful analysis of Maximus' writings reveals that, if self-love is "tropos" of death, then love might be "tropos" of life.[30] Self-love is the bearer of death, while love—particularly love of enemies, even to the point of dying for them—is divine grace, new life, and *theosis*. Because of the weight of love, St Maximus—who was a monk struggling to overcome his own will (ἴδιον θέλημα)—ends many of his works (not only in *Chapters on Love*) with reference to love,[31] because only through a *hypostatic* love is man emancipated from his predisposition to nonbeing.

> It must be said that *those who desire non-being, desire evil.* God is being and above every being. And therefore the truth is being. So it is proper to say that whatever stands against the truth is false and does not exist, because it is completely outside of God. Neither is it an image of truth, as it does not have anything good from God. Because it convinces some, it is certainly something, and it will be a dark and faint idol for those who exist in this way. Because it is an image in its action and a falsehood in its action, that is, it is really and truly a lie. So *for those who exist falsely, and in the whole of this falsehood, if that which is false is removed, the whole essence of the thing will be removed.* In this way, *those who love the lie, as the demons do, love non-being and do not stand in being, that is, in truth, as the Truth itself says.* As Jesus says, the demons, because they are liars and

[29] "For natural potential in each and every being is nothing other than the unalterable movement of nature toward complete actuality. How, then, divinization could make the divinized person go out of himself, I fail to see, if it was something that lay within the bounds of his nature" (*Amb.* 20, PG 91, 1237C).

[30] "For Maximus it is τρόπος ὑπάρξεως that is the key to both personal salvation and personal perdition" (N. Madden, "A Patristic Salutation: The Prologue to the Pater Noster of Maximus the Confessor," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 61:1995, p. 243).

[31] Cf. characteristically *Amb.* 71, 11, PG, 91, 1417C: God "asks of us but a single sacrifice: that we love one another (μόνην ἀπαιτοῦντι παρ' ἡμῶν θυσίαν τὴν εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλανθρωπίαν)"; or: "ἵνα μὴ... τὴν ἐντολὴν τῆς ἀγάπης παραβῶμεν, καὶ τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀγάπης ἐκπέσωμεν" (*Ascet.*, PG 90, 956B).

> fathers of lies, do not exist and desire non-being when they desire the evil of falsehood.[32]

It goes without saying that, for Maximus, fallen humanity is driven by the lust for pleasure (via self-love[33]) and the fear of death. This fear is a "side-effect" of self-love, since the entire effort of man after the Fall is about protecting oneself from others, namely, from the risk of relation and from going out of oneself. "Man's will, out of cowardice, tends away from suffering, and man, against his own will, remains *utterly dominated by the fear of death* and, *in his desire to live*, clings to his *slavery to pleasure*."[34] Therefore, there is no doubt that the fiasco of man's relationship with God is a "mis-hit" with regard to the goal, "skopos."[35] And this results in a negative painful experience of φιλαυτία as "tropos" of division, fragmentation, and disintegration.[36] Fortunately, by not having subsistence, evil does not have ontological content.[37] For St Maximus, the reason why evil is *non-being* is that it is, as Zizioulas concludes, a deviation from, or deprivation of, the movement toward the "end" (τέλος) for which the world was created.[38] The tragedy lies in the fact that man has fallen in love with what has *no being* (τοῦ μηδενὸς ἐρῶντες) by redirecting his love from the Existing one.[39]

In *Quaest. ad Thal.* 61,[40] Maximus elaborates: because of Adam's self-reliance, "death occupied the entire nature," and each who receives being

[32] *Scholia*, PG 4, 293BC.

[33] "The great barrier to actualizing through love the true, communal mode of existence for beings is self-love; this is the 'prime sin' according to St Maximus, the first offspring of the devil and mother of all the passions. Self-love, being antithetical to love, is antithetical to communion, antithetical to truth, antithetical to life. It is the refusal of communion, the lie, death" (N. Loudovikos, *A Eucharistic Ontology*, 143).

[34] *QThal.* 21, Blowers-Wilkin, p. 112.

[35] "Ἁμαρτίαν, τουτέστιν ἀτευξίαν καὶ ἀπόπτωσίν τινα τοῦ προσήκοντος, αὐτὸ τὸ τῆς στερήσεως καλεῖ, καὶ ἄσκοπον, ἀντὶ τοῦ, παρὰ τὸν σκοπὸν βάλλον, ἐκ μεταφορᾶς τῶν τοξευόντων... Τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ τῆς κατὰ φύσιν κινήσεως, ἤτοι τάξεως, ἀποτυγχάνοντες, φερόμεθα εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν ἄλογον καὶ παντελῆ καὶ ἀνούσιον ἀνυπαρξίαν" (*Schol. div. nom.*, PG 4, 348C).

[36] As is clear in *QThal.* PG 90,256C and *Cap.* PG 90,1192A. On the contrary, love is to be understood not as an emotion or sentiment but as mode of unity according to the *logos* of being.

[37] Cf. *Scholia*, PG 4, 304D.

[38] Cf. *QThal.* I, PG 90, 253A-C. J. Z., *Communion and Otherness*, p. 68. Maximus implies the eschatological ontology, which Zizioulas formulates like this: "*only that which survives in the end possesses true being*" (ibid.). If evil would survive in the eternity even as a memory of wrong-doings it would mean that it is concurrent to God.

[39] *Amb.* 7, 32, PG 91, 1093A.

[40] "Death occupied the entire nature owing to the transgression (of Adam)... All those who received their being from Adam according to the law of birth by pleasure [sexually]; nec-

from Adam according to the law of birth by pleasure (i.e., sexually) is un-free and necessarily, without his or her will (ἀναγκαίως καὶ μὴ βουλόμενοι), has his or her birth bound to the very death to which nature was condemned.[41]

The "tropos of death" needs to be transcended by a *new* tropos, which can affect the entire creation so that "time" and "space" become factors of union,[42] acquiring the dynamism of interpenetration with the Uncreated. This is possible mainly because space-time possesses a particular (inherent as a free gift of the Creator's will) quality of *movement*, by which created beings move toward a relationship with each other and toward the Other as their eschatological "end."

It is only Christology that could annul the existential decay, by preserving the created time as a constituent quality of creation. And only the patristic emphasis on the Person of Christ could provide a vital epistemic clue for dealing with this problem.

The Transcendence of Death in Christ

When Maximus fully explores the epistemological implications of the Incarnation it is in the pursuit of ontology. Incarnation would be meaningless without the transcending of death *hypostatically*; so, paradoxically, the Resurrection becomes the cause of the Incarnation. When man "was *made subject to corruption and death*" and "was led to despair of life," then ("for this reason"), the only-begotten Son of God took flesh and death.[43] In this sense, let us not forget that the "second communion"[44] surpasses the first (in paradise).

essarily and without their will (ἀναγκαίως καὶ μὴ βουλόμενοι) had their birth tied up with death to which nature was condemned" (*QThal.* PG 90, 633CD-636B).

[41] The fullest explanation of this can be found in Thunberg's classical book on Maximus, *Microcosm and Mediator*, pp. 169-170.

[42] On the "the dialectical relation between quantifiable or historical time (χρόνος) and the transcendent extension of creaturely movement in a sublime eternity beyond history but short of God's pure timelessness", see Paul M. Blowers, "Realized Eschatology in Maximus the Confessor, *Ad Thalassium 22*", *Studia Patristica* XXXII (1997) 258-263. As Blowers asserts, "Pseudo-Dionysius had determined that αἰὼν was frequently used in the Bible of the whole course of earthly time, distinct from χρόνος, which evoked the process or regularity of change reflected in birth, death, and differentiation."

[43] *Ascet.* 7–31 (1) (CCSG 40), 6–7). Commenting on man's fall, Madden says, "Here man is portrayed as having failed in his vocation to mediation and by his foolishness to have risked being engulfed in the meontic" (N. Madden, *Christology and anthropology in the spirituality of Maximus the Confessor: With special reference to the* Expositio Orationis Dominicae, Doctoral thesis, Durham University 1982. p. 192).

[44] *Amb.* 36, 1, PG 91, 1289B-D.

Now, how does this "second communion" affect the problem of divisions? According to St Maximus, the divisions healed in Christ paradoxically demonstrate that neither one of the "extremes" loses its natural qualities. So, Christ after "living on earth in a way befitting man" and enduring His Passion, rises and by "eating/living with the disciples after His Resurrection from the dead" (συνδιαιτώμενος μετὰ τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνάστασιν) reveals the union of paradise and the inhabited world.[45]

The Confessor then proceeds to throw further light on the interplay between the Incarnation and the Resurrection. He explains how nature is restored in Christ, not only through reconciling the will with the principle of nature, but also—here is an ontological point—*by his choosing to offer his life for the sake of his enemies*, "which was accomplished by the disposition of love for men."[46]

What follows is a passage in which St Maximus will repeat his paradoxical thesis ("certainly an incredible fact and story") that the Resurrection was the reason for Christ's Incarnation. His famous passage on the supreme importance of the Resurrection is well known, and it strongly advocates the epistemological reversal in theology. "*It is wholly on account of this life [resurrection of life] that the Word who is God has become man*...and willingly accepts the death of the flesh."[47] And only by Resurrection can we understand the creation of the world. The already eschatological event of the Resurrection of Christ, being *ontologically anterior* yet *historically posterior*, operates as the foremost hermeneutical context for each epoch.[48] The Resurrection clarifies, at least in Max-

[45] *Amb.* 41, 8, PG 91, 1309B.

[46] *Or. Dom.* PG 90, 879d-880B; transl. Berthold, p. 104.

[47] "He effects the destruction of the tyranny of evil which has lorded over us by trickery. He conquers the flesh which had been overcome in Adam by brandishing it as an instrument against evil. Thus does he show how the *flesh*, which had been bruised first by death, captures its captor and destroys its life by natural death. The *flesh* has become both a poison strong enough to make him vomit out all those whom he had swallowed by confining them in death's dominion, and also *a life for the human race*, which causes the whole nature to rise like a loaf for a resurrection of life. *It is wholly on account of this life [resurrection of life] that the Word who is God has become man* (certainly an incredible fact and story) and willingly accepts the death of the flesh" (*Or. Dom.*, PG 90, 879d-880B; transl. Berthold, p. 104).

[48] *Cap. Theol.* I, 66; PG 90, 1108. The method of theology is thus methodology of the Resurrection. More on that see our "The Resurrection Event of Christ as the Foremost Hermeneutic Context for each Epoch" (forthcoming).

imus' account, the exact ontological import of the Incarnation into the history of salvation.

The weight of our last statement might be clearer in the next passage where Maximus reveals exactly how death is overcome in humanity (not only in Christ, but in all of us). Here also lies the answer to the question of Maximus' acceptance both of the immortality of the soul (though he is not satisfied with it as a solution to the problem of death) and the crucial significance of the body (for him, founded in Christology[49]). Maximus elucidates *that mortality* is extinguished by the fact that in place of division a personal presence has intervened. Through "denying" our life on account of Christ's personal presence through grace, we will acquire "the living and active and utterly single Word of God, who through virtue and knowledge penetrates to the division between soul and spirit (Heb. 4:12), so that absolutely no part of his existence will remain without a share in His presence."[50] This corresponds to what he says in the same line: "The soul's powers...cannot move in an effective operation without the consent of the willing person."[51] This personal mode affects everything in man.

> [A]fter the death of the body, the soul is not called "soul" in an unqualified way, but the soul of a man, indeed the soul *of a particular human being*, for even after [its separation from] the body, it possesses, as its own form, the whole human being, which is predicated of it by virtue of its relation [to the body] as a part to the whole [i.e., only in this way is it called "human"]. The same holds in the case of the body.[52]

[49] See characteristically, *Or. Dom.*, PG 90, 879d-880B.

[50] "If, in addition to these things, he should also *deny his own life* [=self, ἑαυτόν...ἠρνήσατο], according to the divine voice, which says: *He who loses his own life for my sake, he will find it*—that is, whoever casts aside this present life and its desires for the sake of the better life—will acquire the *living and active* and absolutely unique *Word of God*, who through virtue and knowledge *penetrates to the division between soul and spirit*, so that absolutely no part of his existence will remain without a share in His presence (μηδὲν τὸ παράπαν τῆς αὐτοῦ παρουσίας ἄμοιρον ἔχει), and thus he becomes without beginning or end, no longer bearing within himself the movement of life subject to time, which has a beginning and an end, and which is agitated by many passions, but possesses only the divine and eternal life of the Word dwelling within him, which is in no way bounded by death (μηδενὶ θανάτῳ περατουμένην)" (*Amb.* 10. 20, PG 91, 1144C; translation in Fr Maximos).

[51] *Amb.* 24, 2, PG 91, 1261C.

[52] *Amb.* 7, 42, PG 91, 1101B.

Anticipating what Origenist objections might be raised against his views, Maximus dedicates a passage in *Ambiguum* 21, in which he comments on Gregory Nazianzus' *Homily* 7,[53] offering indications on how death is overcome.[54]

For Maximus, if the *undying* mode of the Uncreated is to be recognized and received by the entire human being, this must occur through the body, too. The result of "being estranged from relation with God" is the establishment of "a *mode* of existence that in fact does not exist."[55] This disposition toward non-being, that Maximus speaks of is in fact an existential *attitude/stance*, and not simply a psychological state (compared to conventional wisdom).

True being, that is life, is gained by "dying" and by having love toward one's enemies—thus not allowing thus the "fragmentation of nature." That is the "mode of life" by which Christ "restores nature to itself...in such a way that we no longer have a will (τὴν γνώμην) opposed to the principle of nature and that thus we be as changeless in our free decisions as we are in our nature."[56]

But how can this need to die be reconciled with the θέλησις, the will to live? Because we know that by refusing death in Gethsemane, Christ manifested desire for life as an essential condition of human nature.[57]

[53] Gregory the Theologian, *Or.* 7.21 (SC 405:234, lines 12-20).

[54] "For just as the flesh was swallowed up by corruption (ὑπὸ τῆς φθορᾶς) as a result of sin; and likewise the soul by the flesh (since it is known only through the activities of the body); and the knowledge of God by the soul's complete ignorance (to the point of not even knowing whether or not God exists), so too, in the time of the resurrection (τῷ καιρῷ τῆς ἀναστάσεως) —when the Holy Spirit will restore the correct order, for the sake of the God who became flesh—the flesh will be spiritually swallowed up by the soul, and the soul by God, who is true life (τῆς ὄντως οὔσης ζωῆς), inasmuch as the soul will possess God exclusively, wholly manifested through all things to the whole soul, and, to put it simply, in contrast to the present state of affairs in which we now exist and live, all that is ours will be revealed under the aspect of the future (πάντα κατὰ τὸ μέλλον) by the divine grace of the resurrection, so that just as [1252B] death prevailed over this life and swallowed all through sin, death (ὁ θάνατος) itself will be justly defeated by that life, and swallowed up by grace" (*Amb.* 21, PG 91, 1251-1252B).

[55] "Receiving the dreadful condemnation of being estranged from relation with God (λαβοῦσα κατάκρισιν τὴν πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν σχετικὴν ἀλλοτρίωσιν), for infinite ages, a sentence it will not be able to contest, for it will have as a perpetually relentless accuser its own disposition (τὴν ὑποστήσασαν τὸ μὴ ὄν διάθεσις κατήγορον ἔχουσα), which created for it a mode of existence that in fact did not exist" (*Amb.* 21, PG 91, 1252C).

[56] *Or. Dom.* PG 90, 879d-880B; transl. Berthold, p. 104.

[57] "In the face of death, as an immediately imminent event, he himself who was God in the flesh was 'in agony' (not in a state of wonder or emotion)" (Ch. Yannaras, *The Enigma of Evil*, p. 59).

Safeguarding for us a subtle distinction, Maximus notes that both the *will for life* and *the abomination of death* are the qualities of *a willful nature* that tends towards *"skopos,"* its end.[58] The notion of "will" (θέλησις) is crucial for understanding death and life. By this, θέλησις is not merely connected with the preservation of life.[59] In his *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, Maximus holds that the Lord did not assume the fear of death, which is opposed to nature; He assumed the fear according to nature (ὡς τῆς *ἐνυπαρχούσης τῇ φύσει ἀντιποιητικῆς τοῦ εἶναι δυνάμεως* ἐνδεικτικήν, θέλων δι' ἡμᾶς ὡς ἀγαθός, ἐδέξατο).[60] Here lies Maximus' genius: θέλησις is related not merely to life itself,[61] but to the "end goal" (*telos*) of man's movement, to the eschatological fullness κατὰ λόγον (i.e., Christ). Therefore, θέλησις without personal freedom (αὐτεξούσιον) is hopeless, since only the person leads nature to the end. Evil, and sin too, according to this Father, is a deviation from the movement towards the "end."

This clearly indicates what in Christology has the first and ultimate word. The critical moment in which the two natural wills of Christ emerge and express themselves is unquestionably His prayer at Gethsemane before His passion. It was at that instant that the human will demonstrated its natural desire for life, while the divine will moved and inclined towards the Eschaton, i.e., the fulfillment of the will of the Father. But what will deify the human natural will is not a will *per se*, but the words of Christ to His Father "not as I will but as You will" making it follow the divine. Yet, particular attention must be paid here; as Zizioulas remarks (in the paper in this volume,) Christ's surrendering of his human will should not be attributed to a process of the wills willing and acting naturally, i.e., qua natures. Here the human will was perfected (deified) only because it was expressed and realized by a divine Person.

[58] So, nature must be actualized in order to reach its "telos" (Ταύτην δὲ τὴν κίνησιν δύναμιν καλοῦσιν φυσικήν, πρὸς τὸ κατ' αὐτὴν τέλος ἐπειγομένην," *Amb.* 7, PG 91, 1072B).

[59] Cf. Felix Heinzer, "Anmerkungen zum Willensbegriff Maximus' Confessors," *Freiburger Zeitschrift fur Philosophie und Theologie* 28 (1981) 372-392.

[60] *Pyrr.*, PG 91, 297A-300A.

[61] As Heinzer points out, the notion of θέλησις appears on the one hand as an expression of the self-sustaining dynamic of human nature; yet on the other, θέλησις for Maximus includes (from "practical" Christology) things like one's capacity for self-disposition together with one's aptitude for self-offering, which could then signify the free undertaking of death for the sake of others in Christ, an undertaking which transcends one's aspiration for physical survival and which is understood to be the human activity of the Son of God" ("Anmerkungen zum Willensbegriff Maximus' Confessors," p. 389).

> In the Lord what is natural does not precede what is freely willed, as happens with us; rather, just as He truly hungered and thirsted, but did not hunger and thirst in the same way (as we do) but in a way above what is human because it was free, so he also genuinely experienced fear of death, but a fear that was above the human.[62]

The natural fear of death—a fear that belongs to nature—Christ allowed through his personal freedom because on this freedom relies his entire human nature. When the natural opposition of the two natures occurs at Gethsemane, it is His personal identity—found in His relationship with the Father—that brings the solution. The Person of the Logos who brings the two natural wills into harmony at Gethsemane is the same Person who brought the two natures into one unity in the Incarnation. So, basically, what Maximus reveals to us here is that the will should be used not in a "*gnomic*" way, but in an eschatological, i.e., *personal,* way.[63]

Summarizing his argument, we see that one of the reasons that Maximus believes the Resurrection-as-eschatological event explains history is that "humanity truly discovers the original purpose of its creation only teleologically,"[64] i.e., retrospectively. In the history of salvation, the solution comes "first," and then we understand the problem. In such a perspective, Maximus is audacious to say that Christ's Resurrection "was the reason for His death."[65]

Following the above lines of argumentation, where death is seen as fragmenting nature, Maximus is able to link to it every human failure or sin. The range of terms describing different modes of corrupt life is fairly broad and fluid in Maximus' thought.[66] One notices how he links some *prima facie* psychological states (resentment, for example) with the problem of death. Actually, he describes resentment (μνησικακία),

[62] *Pyrr.* PG 91, 297D. Cf. *Opusc.*, ibid. 237AB. See also, "He did these things—and all the rest—*moving willingly the assumed nature* that truly had become and is called His own" (*Amb.* 5, 8, PG 91, 1049D),

[63] Cf. lucid remarks by Maria Luisa Gatti, "Visione sinottica del pensiero di Massimo sulla base dei suoi testi fondamentali," *Massimo il Confessore, Studi e testi* No 2, Milano, Vita e pensiero, 1987, p. 381.

[64] Blowers, *Exegesis and Spiritual Pedagogy in Maximus the Confessor*, p. 8; Blowers refers here to *QThal.* 59, PG 90, 613B-D.

[65] "His resurrection, which was the reason for His death" (*Amb.* 10, 49. PG, 91, 1145B).

[66] ἀνάγκη, φθορά, πάθη, φιλαυτία, τροπή, αλλοίωσις, γέννησις, διαίρεσις, are some of the examples.

as the most cruel form of separation, because "hurt is linked to resentment; thus when someone's mind associates the face of a brother with hurt, it is clear that he bears him a grudge."[67]

It is no wonder, then, that Maximus the Confessor explains the role of the will in dealing with fragmentation and death through the example of the remembrance of wrongs. He writes that the state in which we call to mind our past sins occurs when a memory lingers in our mind, gradually fragmenting the "nature willingly" because remembrance of wrongs (done to us) brings one into conflict with another who shares the same nature. This process stands in stark contrast to the *love for one's enemies* that lead to true union of the free will with the *logos* of nature. Through such love, nature ceases to rebel against itself through the action of the free will, which leads to reconciliation with God Himself.[68]

Maximus insists that if the free will unites itself with the *logos* of nature, then he who has established this unity will not rebel against God.[69] In *Epistle* 2 on love, Maximus indicates how "nature (ἡ φύσις) remains undamaged and undivided in those that have received this grace, *not divided* up into the differences [othernesses] introduced by inclination in the many (ταῖς τῶν πολλῶν γνωμικαῖς ἑτερότησιν οὐ συνδιατεμνομένη)."[70]

I find very accurate the observation of John Zizioulas, as a keen reader of Maximus, that "unless we acknowledge this conflict and cease to draw otherness and particularity from natural reproduction ('from blood or the will of the flesh or the will of man'), we cannot understand

[67] *Carit.* III, 89, PG 90, 1044C.

[68] "Non-love...constitutes an aggressive claim to autonomy, an aggressive pursuit of self-interest. Not only indifference to the other, an avoidance, ignoring and circumvention of the other, but also an active attempt to dominate him, to use and exploit him" (Ch. Yannaras, *The Enigma of Evil*, p. 116).

[69] "For since free will [γνώμη] has been thus united to the principle of nature [ἑνωθείσης τῆς γνώμης τῷ λόγῳ τῆς φύσεως], the reconciliation of God with nature comes about naturally, for otherwise it is not possible for nature in rebellion against itself by free will [γνώμη] to receive the inexpressible divine condescension....He has made it very clear that *when the will* [γνώμη, intention, cf. transl. Berthold] *has been united to the principle of nature*, the free choice [προαίρεσις] of those who have kept it so *will not be in conflict with God* [ὅτι τῆς γνώμης ἑνωθείσης τῷ λόγῳ τῆς φύσεως, ἀστασίαστος ἔσται πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν] since nothing is considered unreasonable [παράλογον] in the principle of nature, which is as well a natural and a divine law, when the movement of free will [γνώμη] is made in conformity with it" *Or. Dom.*, PG 90, 901cd; transl. Berthold, p. 116. Cf. J. Zizioulas, "Eucharist and the Kingdom of God," *Sourozh* 60/1995, p. 41.

[70] *Ep.* 2, PG 91, 401A.

the necessity of birth 'from above' or 'from the Spirit," that is, the necessity of Baptism."[71] Zizioulas attaches a particular meaning to that new birth, inviting us to "note how Maximus contrasts Baptism with biological birth in *Amb.* 42.[72] "Baptism is a birth which 'abolishes' or 'rejects' (ἀθέτησις) the 'unfree' (ἀπροαίρετον) biological birth, and leads to 'ever-being' (ἀεὶ εἶναι) and 'immortality' (ἀθανασίαν)."[73] Here is another exemple from St Maximus.

> The Fathers according to the spirit [κατὰ πνεῦμα], he says, are established through their teaching, being voluntary fathers of voluntary sons [θελόντων υἱῶν θέλοντες καθίστανται Πατέρες], forming them according to God by means of their word and life; and sons according to the spirit, according to their consent [κατὰ θέλησιν], through learning become voluntary sons of voluntary fathers [αὐθαιρέτων υἱοὶ γίνονται Πατέρων], by their free disposition [αὐθαίρετοι γνωμικῶς] being formed by them according to God by means of the word and life (of the fathers). For the grace of the Spirit makes the birth of those who give birth and those who are born a matter of free choice (i.e., gnomic), which is something that fathers according to flesh do not have [οἱ κατὰ σάρκα πατέρες οὐκ ἔχουσιν], since they are involuntary fathers of involuntary sons [ἀκουσίων υἱῶν πατέρες ἀκούσιοι], inasmuch as the formation of those who give birth and those who are born naturally [ἡ τῶν φυσικῶς γεννώντων τε καὶ γεννωμένων] is a work of nature and not of free choice [φύσεως γάρ, ἀλλ' οὐ γνώμης].[74]

By the methods and criteria of scientific (non-ontological epistemic) accounts, we can *do* nothing or little about death. However, Maximus, with an ontological semantics, elucidates how death is *anthropologically*—in the corporeo-spiritual totality of the human person—fought and defeated through freedom and love. The Saints are, according to Maximus, those persons among us capable of uniting the fractures of nature through a constant *modification* of their mode of being, so that they become worthy of the love that gave them birth. "For the sake of love the saints all resist sin continually, finding no meaning in this present life, and they endure *many forms of death*, that

[71] *Communion and Otherness*, p. 80.

[72] PC 91, 1348A-1349A.

[73] *Communion and Otherness*, p. 80.

[74] *QThal.* 54, scholion 7 (CCSG 22, p. 469, lines 38-48; PG 90, 528BC).

they may be gathered from this world to themselves and to God, and *unite* in themselves the *fractures of nature* (τὰ τῆς φύσεως ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν ἑνώσωσι ῥήγματα)."[75] It is a personal intervention of the love of God that heals the fractures and grants the blessing of freedom from death.

The Church as Communion of Love and Life through the Eucharist

What implications do Maximus' claims, now that they are exposed, have for ecclesiology? For Maximus, the role of love, linked with the "logos"—since the Logos is revealed personally only through love—is to reunite (and thus, reintegrate) all the modes (the rational, volitional, affective, and sensate) of the person and to rediscover the unity of all beings, leading everything into the eucharistic partaking of God and ultimate communion of the Eschata, "from the present age into life unending."[76] Death can be defeated only by the dynamic *relationality* and *communion*.

Maximus extensively attributes to love a dynamic unifying character, since love "persuades the inclination (τὴν γνώμην) to follow nature and not in any way to be at variance with the [eschatological] *logos* of nature."[77] He describes with an amazing ontological conclusiveness the loving self-transcending and self-offering being: "Love is the fulfillment (συμπλήρωσις) ...wholly embraced as the final Last Desire (τὸ Ἔσχατον Ὄρεκτόν), and furnishes them *rest* (στάσις) from their movement. For love gives faith the reality of what it believes and hope the presence of what it hopes for, and the enjoyment of the One who is Present [of beloved person]."[78]

Love and freedom liberate us—if I may borrow some idioms from Christos Yannaras—from "a passive self-completion and a defensive self-sufficiency of the individual being."[79] So by love, "each is so drawn to his neighbor in preference (κατὰ πρόθεσιν) to himself and so honours him before himself, ὅσον τὸ πρὶν αὐτὸν ἀπεῶσαι, that he is eager to spurn any

[75] *Ep.* 2, PG 91,404D. Translation M. Thoronen, p. 193. Without any doubt the Saints here follow Christ's death which is "an actual withdrawal from any pursuit of self-sufficiency, an actual self-surrender to the love of the Father" (Ch. Yannaras, *The Enigma of Evil*, p. 60).

[76] *Or. Dom.*, PG 90, 904A.

[77] *Ep.* 2 *(on Love)*, PG 91, 396C.

[78] *Ep.*2 *(on Love)*, PG 91, 396C.

[79] Ch. Yannaras, *The Enigma of Evil*, p. 116.

obstacle in his desire to excel."[80] It is clear here that love is inseparable from αὐτεξούσιον, i.e., from the power of self-determination. Only freedom can convert natural into personal, and only freedom can negate the logical absolutism of the fallen state and lead to personal causality of God. Maximus is "constantly concerned with man's freedom, and so with what frees him to be truly free."[81] Yet, since the opposite of love, φιλαυτία, is a *tropos* of division and fragmentation and segmentation,[82] we can apprehend that love is a *tropos* of unity according to the *logos* of beings.[83]

The outcome of Maximus' lucid line of argument is crucial for both his contemporaries and our own: the eucharistic nourishment of Christ is the only way of overcoming death. The Eucharist is irreconcilable with existential finitude since it is the "medicine of immortality."[84] The reversal of this proposition would be: "if our nature were filled with the divine eucharistic nourishment, it would not be 'taken captive' by the death of sin."[85] Maximus explains that the eucharistic (the eucharistic Bread) exists to prepare for immortality, which is distinguished from our nature;[86] in the present age of mortality, this food serves to defeat "the death of sin."

The goal of the entire argument in Maximus' *Ambiguum* 7 is to summarize "the manifestation of the truth believed by Christians," which is: "that we are *the members and the body of Christ*, and that we constitute the *fullness* of Christ God, who fills all things in every way *according to the plan* hidden in God the Father before the ages, with the result that we are being *recapitulated* to Him through His Son and our Lord and God Jesus Christ."[87] In that case, hell, the existence of which Maximus apparently believes in, consists of the following: "[it] is the complete and utter ignorance of divine grace, by which...all those who expended all the natural noetic power that they were given on

[80] "ἑκάστου δηλονότι τοσοῦτον πρός ἑαυτόν κατά πρόθεσιν ἐφελκομένου τόν πέλας, καί ἑαυτοῦ προτιμῶντος, ὅσον τό πρίν αὐτόν ἀπεῶσαι, καί προύχειν πρόθυμος ἦν" (PG 90, 400A).

[81] Madden, "A Patristic Salutation...", p. 249.

[82] As is clear in *QThal. PG* 90,256C and *CQCC PG* 90,1192A.

[83] Moreover, Maximus speaks of "ἀγάπης θεσμόν τε καὶ τρόπον" in *Or. Dom.* PG 90, 873B, while in *Ep.* 3 PG 91,409C, he refers to "φιλάλληλον τρόπον," which unites the rifts in nature in cooperation with God via ἀγάπη.

[84] "φάρμακον ἀθανασίας" of St. Ignatius (*Ephesians* 20:2). Here we find a connection between Ignatius' and Maximus' ontology.

[85] *Or. Dom.*, PG 90:897AB. See, also, N. Loudovikos, *A Eucharistic Ontology*, p. 29.

[86] See N. Loudovikos, p. 29.

[87] *Amb* 7, 37, PG 91, 1097A.

non-being will be deprived of the transmission of the radiant and inviolate life."[88]

This is where Maximus' defying and refutation of thanatology leads a trenchant reader of his writings. The theology of the Medieval monk Maximus the Confessor can help us move toward greater articulacy on these issues today, where confusion caused by the "therapeutic" approach to theology threatens to neglect the *quintessence* of the Church's life. The entirety of this life—ascetical and sacramental—has this goal[89]: to refer to the divine Mystagogy, which dispels and obliterates everything divisive and false, in the image of "the future age," when "works of sin will pass into non-existence, leaving nature's own forces safe and sound."[90] In this sense, Maximus regards the "end" as "stasis" in God, but, paradoxically, this "stasis" is described as "eternally-moving." According to him, "the more [mankind] labors in virtue for knowledge of God, we are perfected and move towards increase. For their ends are established as new beginnings."[91]

Conclusions

Is there a way to not only avoid death but to live an unwaning life? Such an ambitious question has long tantalized the world's best thinkers. St Maximus the Confessor offers a solid theological and consistent philosophical ground for our own discussion of this matter by offering four crucial concepts: *mode*, *logos*, *love*, and *freedom*, all of them used by the *person*. What we find crucial in Maximus' relational ontology is his ability to take any ethical category or spiritual passage as a starting point and attach it to the problem of being as is shown in the irreducible reality of Christ, who introduces true life into mortal existence.[92]

[88] *QThal.* PG 90, 293A.

[89] Speaking on the significance of the Baptism: "The baptism of the Lord typifies the sufferings we *willingly* embrace for the sake of virtue. Through these sufferings, we wash off the stains in our conscience and *willingly accept the death* of our propensity for visible things. The cup (τὸ ποτήριον) typifies the involuntary trials which attack us in the form of adverse circumstances because of our pursuit of the truth. If throughout these trials we value our desire for God more than nature, we willingly submit to the *death of nature* (τῆς φύσεως θάνατον) forced on us by these circumstances. The baptism and the cup differ in this way: baptism for the sake of virtue *mortifies* our propensity for the pleasures of this life; the cup makes the devout value truth above even nature itself" (*Cap.* 98–100, PG 90:1220C–1221A).

[90] *QD.* 73, PG 90, 848A.

[91] *Cap. Theol.* 55, PG 90, 1096C.

[92] Maximus always takes a scriptural passage, or *aporia*, as "a point of departure" for a *theological* expounding leading the very mystery of salvation. Cf. P. Blowers, *Exegesis and Spiritual Pedagogy in Maximus the Confessor*, p. 61.

Yet how can this problem of death be dealt with in the postmodern relativism of today, which is postulated by a "worldview" where manifold opinions on the afterlife are equivalently acceptable? Postmodernism has no moral absolutes but, rather, places responsibility into the hands of the individual. In this cultural situation where there are plethora of realities, *each position on the afterlife is relative to an individual's meaning of truth*. So can there be any definite postmodern view of the afterlife since *nothing is definite*?

For Maximus, there is one hope that death can be defeated, but that is not an individual's hope. Unlike some postmodern views, he insists that the solution is found in *changing* the *tropos* (mode) in which the human hypostasis is grounded. In his thought, the *logos* is constant, while the *tropos* is a modality that cannot annul this permanence. The contribution of Maximus' *tropos* is that it introduces dynamism and movement into being. The problem with postmodernism is that there is not a solid and unique *logos* (and this is its crucial problem) but solely the multiple *tropoi* (modes), *fluid* and *different from individual to individual*. St Maximus' response would be that everything depends on the "mode" (*how*) rather than on the "essence" (*what*). And the "mode" depends on man's acceptance of Christ's person in love and freedom. Maximus is, therefore, "postmodern" in the sense of allowing many *tropoi* to take place with the condition that the one Logos is unchanging, meaning: be free in adapting your *tropos* to the eschatological *skopos*!

As J. Lollar questions, does modern *technê* (technology), aspiring to fabricate an artificial Eden in which man is not, or is no longer, subject to nature, finally *alter* his "mode"? Through the prevention of *pathos*, which acquire the likeness of Christ's death (τῷ ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου [Χριστοῦ] διὰ τῶν αὐτῶν παθημάτων), are we in danger of preventing also our "sharing in the nature of his Resurrection"?[93]

In the present study, we attempted to show how St Maximus the Confessor's work explores the interconnectedness and permeability of life and death. The distinctions and subtle nuances (the will to live, fear of death, participation in life, evil as non-being, hatred as mortal sin, etc.) are brought into a closer *ontological* milieu. These aspects of St Maximus theology become extremely important today as argument against the so-

[93] *Amb.* 31, PG 91, 1281B.

called "thanatology," which studies death through psychology and sociology. St Maximus is opposed a phenomenology that avoids the nature of death in favor of focusing on the problem of *suffering* (cf. paliative care) because he regards death as the last enemy that needs to be destroyed and was in fact destroyed with Christ's Resurrection.

Maximus' capacity to create a variety of epistemological tools stamped by their sensitive attention to the ontological dimension of human relationship with God leads him to a fascinating synthesis with a dialectic that is cross-resurrectional. He takes the ontology of the erotic-personal beyond the sacrifice on the Cross, proceeding beyond—to the centrality of the Resurrection in the economy of salvation.

By relating Christ's triumph over death to personal freedom (and his *tropos*), Maximus anticipates humanity's *mortification* of death when it submits the entire self-determining will (*autexousion thelema*) to God. In his distinctions (being, well-being, eternal well-being—as opposed to "faring ill") lie the importance of his thought for the problems of our modern time (nihilism, brain death, senescence, the quest of immortality through "cryonics," etc.).

It is the Paschal experience that makes our existence comprehensible and justifiable. According to Maximus, the Resurrection alone permits knowledge of the purpose underlying all; central to this knowledge is the Eucharist, as both Paschal experience and also the place where death is conquered and overcome. By denying determinism, the created being in the Church is led to the point where it functions in a different way (*tropos*), a way that is not opposed to the goal (λόγος-σκοπὸς) of its nature. By not allowing "separation of the one who loves from the beloved,"[94] the Church through the Eucharist and prayer intervenes by offering an antidote to the ontological individualism through "the resurrection, according to which we will be transformed by grace unto eternal well-being."[95]

[94] Maximus the Confessor, *Ep.*1, PG 91, 389B.
[95] *Amb.* 42, 12, PG 91, 1325BC.

The Ontological Realism of our Hopes Hereafter: Conclusions from St Maximus the Confessor's Brief References

Christos Yannaras

Maximus the Confessor did not write a dedicated treatise or homily or epistle or any other systematic reference on the subject of the continuation of man's existence after death. However, there are, scattered through his works, hints on the subject, which could perhaps form a sufficient basis for us to understand his perspective. His brief references usually convey an ontological approach that is valuable for the empirical character which is required for the realism of the ecclesial testimony.

Two clarifications would be useful to correctly understand Maximus' approach on the afterlife:

First of all, we should clarify, what is the role and the authority of the patristic texts and of Scripture itself in the life of the Church. And to be more specific: is it the Church that "gives birth" to Scripture and Tradition; do Scripture and Tradition record the testimony of the ecclesial experience? Or is it Tradition and Scripture that "give birth" to the Church, that act as the "sources" of the ecclesial truth (just as Marx's texts gave birth to Marxism or Freud's texts to Freudianism)? In the first case, the Church's truth is an event, a mode of existence incarnate in a specific "body" of human coexistence. This mode, this way of existence iconizes (that is, pursues and potentially realizes freedom from all necessity and from all restrictions of time, space, deterioration, and death):

the mode of existence of the uncreated triune Causal Principle of existence. The experience of the ecclesial body is recorded and testified in the texts of the Scripture, in the liturgical texts, in the texts of the Fathers. The texts themselves are a record of this experience; they do not substitute the experience; the experience itself (the mode of existence) is the truth; texts can only show us its limits—at best. We will not come to *know* the triunity of God by reading the Scripture or synodal decrees, but we will come to know it by participating (perhaps over a long time) in the mode of existence that constitutes the Church.

In the second case, if Scripture and Tradition "give birth" to the Church and are the "sources" of her truth, then the truth of the Church is percieved as an objective fact—each person can individually possess it (with the help of his intellect, his emotions, or any other individual quality). The truth can be his individual possession, privilege, and armor of his ego. The objectified "sources" of truth, the texts, are recognized and sanctified in themselves, like idols, and the individual fidelity to the letter of biblical, patristic or of liturgical texts alienates the faith: from an event and "athlema" of confidence and self-givingness it is turned into individual "beliefs." And the idolized "correctness" of these individual beliefs is turned into measurable earned merit and egocentric self-hedonism.

Here is the second clarification, so that we can understand Maximus the Confessor's hints on the continuation of man's life after death:

It is exactly because the truth of the Church is a "how" and not a "what" (it is the mode of the formation and function of her eucharistic body, a mode that is the "athlema" of iconizing the trinitarian fullness of being) that the apposition of "theses" that claim to answer any human question on meta-physics does not precede the Church.

As a rule, the Church expressed the testimony of her experience using the language of the time of her historical birth, the religious language that was then understood by everyone for every subject pertaining to meta-physics (the language that was also used by the Hebrews to express the unveiling of God in their history). That is why, in the texts of the New Testament, the division of the transcendental existence in numbered "heavens" is treated as a self-evident fact; or the presence of God is stated as fire, earthquake, and a flying bird; or the angelology and daemonology common in almost all pagan religions of the Middle East prevails, etc.

The Church intervened only in cases where her empirical truth was falsified or formulated in a language too susceptible to significant deviations from the ecclesial mode of existence. She intervened in councils, in synods, to express and formulate in words through the testimony of her bishops the experience of the whole catholic Church. And in these instances the language used by the Church to express herself was the universal language formed by the Greeks to express the ontological problem with claims of consistent (that is, wholly communicable) empiricism, for the first time in human history: the problem of the distinction of the real and the imaginary or the conceived, of the actually existing and of the transient and ephemeral, the problem of the "meaning" (of the cause and the purpose) of existence.

The Church, thus, defined her faith in—and experience of—the triunity of God and of the Incarnation of the Son and Logos with the language of the ontological concern of the Greeks, along with the realism and catholicity of this language. The Church also defined the distinction between the icon and the idol, the distinction between the icon and the decorative painting and pleasing to the individual's senses. There was no ecumenical and synodal decree concerning our hopes hereafter, an illumination of the ecclesial hope's ontological content.

Maximus the Confessor imports some ontological clarifications in the brief hints on the subject scattered through his works. However, he avoids completing a systematic ontological approach which could be understood as a hermeneutic "thesis." Let us not forget that is seems impossible to express, to signify a reality to which we don't have sensory access through our language. Apostle Paul describes the experience of existence beyond the senses as something literally indescribable: "[He] heard things so astounding that they cannot be expressed in words, things no human is allowed to utter." (2 Cor 12:4)—"no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor 2:9).

However, the ecclesial testimony has achieved to express the experience of the reality of the created world as well as that of the uncreated with the help of the Greek philosophical language of ontology (with the categories: essence-nature [οὐσία-φύση], person-hypostasis [πρόσωπο-ὑπόσταση], energies of nature [ἐνέργειες τῆς φύσης], hypostatic properties [ὑποστατικὰ ἰδιώματα], otherness [ἑτερότητα], freedom

[ἐλευθερία], relation [σχέση], etc.). This is done while being always conscious of the apophatic character of the formulations in language, of the fact that the understanding of the signifiers is not identical with the knowledge of the signified, of the fact that truth is not limited to its formulations in language. Such an effort to express and signify the reality of our hopes hereafter with the language of consistent ontological questioning has not taken place in the Church's history.

Didn't the request for such an effort appear? Has the need for it not manifested? Was it impossible to convene an Ecumenical Council from some point in history onwards?

The fact remains that the Church prays and speaks about the hereafter, until today, with the juridical and psychological language of the ancient Middle Eastern religions, interspersed with fragments of revealing ontological expressions that remain unconnected, if not inconsistent, with the rest of the religious teaching.

Saint Maximus introduces ontological designations that could become a starting point for a search for a more consistently ecclesial (as opposed to religious) expression of our hope hereafter. The first valuable interpretative clarification that we owe to him is his position that after death the existence of the human person is realized not "by nature," but "by Grace." [1]

We term "person" (πρόσωπον) the logical (i.e., pertaining to Logos) hypostasis of each man "in the image of God," each hypostatic realization of human nature. The human person exists by hypostasizing (constituting as hypostasis) the created energies of the created human nature; it hypostasizes them "with individual properties," that is both with morphic (distinctive) otherness and with active (free from predeterminations) otherness. And the question arises: after the physical death, after the complete shutting down of the created human nature's created energies, which energies does the human hypostasis hypostasize so that it can constitute an existing person, an actually existing being? Saint Maximus answers: after our death, the hypostasis hypostasizes not the created nature any more, but the uncreated Grace. Man exists not "by nature" but "by Grace"; his existence is realized not through the created energies of

[1] See *Myst.* PG 91, 696.— *Cap. theol.* PG 90 1312 C.—Christos Yannaras, *The Effable and the Ineffable* (*Τὸ ρητὸ καὶ τὸ ἄρρητο*), Chapter 19, Κεφ. 17, 2-2.5.1.

a created nature, but with the energies of an existence given as a present by God, with the uncreated energies of divine Grace.

Maximus creates with his ontological interpretative proposal the possibility for an ontological interpretation of hell as well, which is usually understood by religious standards, that is with juridical and psychological ones. In Maximus' perspective, God does neither create or impose hell as a punishment. God is only love, and He gives himself to every human being getting united with him "towards the eternity, towards immortality." If man's freedom has developed in him a "quality of disposition" (ποιότητα διαθέσεως) capable of responding to the Grace of his union with God, then the union will be for the one uniting with God an "inconceivable pleasure" (ἀνεννόητος ἡδονή). If man receives this life-giving Grace but cannot respond to it, hasn't acquired the preparedness and responsiveness for it, then his union with God will be "unspeakable suffering" (ἀνεκλάλητος ὀδύνη), hell.

"Everyone's quality of disposition" (Η ὑποκειμένη ἑκάστῳ ποιότητα τῆς διαθέσεως), which will judge the union of man with God after death as an "inconceivable pleasure" or as an "unspeakable suffering," is a second ontological perspective by Saint Maximus that is crucial for our hopes. He does not analyze the content of this "quality" that will determine the "disposition"—and by disposition he means here our willingness to devote and give ourselves, the freedom we have to give positive or negative response and self-offering to the union with God that is offered by Him.

However, this "quality" may not be translated into a logistical numbering and contradistinction of good deeds and sins; this juridical understanding screams of its religious (and not ecclesial) roots. An ecclesial approach would perhaps be to see in this "quality of disposition" a preparedness that does not come "through observation" (Luke 17:20) and probably finds its most characteristic illustration in the thief's "remember me" shortly before his last breath. The thief's "quality of disposition" turns him into a partaker of "paradise" on the same day, without requiring the slightest merits.

A third ontological clarification by Maximus concerns the existential fullness we expect after death, "when [man] joins the Providence in all immediacy, without mediation."[2] How could we come to under-

[2] *QThal.* PG 90, 760.

stand this direct joining, this participation in the fullness of being by Grace, in terms of a mode of existence? In the funeral service of today's "Orthodox" Churches, which is formulated in a purely religious language, supplications for the "eternal rest" of the deceased and for the forgiveness (of sins, of faults, of crimes) that this "rest" presupposes are continuously repeated. However, for the man who has tasted in his earthly life the joyous adventure of research, of creating, of a knowledge that remains always unlimited, of the vast diversity of beauty, of the astonishment of love and of child-bearing, of the expressive abilities of Art, for this person an "eternal rest" (that is, a perhaps voluptuous but surely stagnant inactivity, some kind of retirement without an end through death) would be a complete nightmare.

Saint Maximus sees that the becoming of existence presupposes movement as a necessity: the perpetual motion of the created world until the end of the Aeons is realized in its returning movement towards its existential Cause, a Cause that is "essentially" inaccessible.[3] Therefore, when the human hypostasis will hypostasize the uncreated Grace and not the created nature, there will be no movement and motion just as there will be no dimension (space and time). Maximus, in his attempt to signify this reality of participating in the ineffable mode of the Uncreated with the language of the created, joins contradictory concepts together: he says that the human existence will "acquire an ever-moving repose and a stationary movement."[4] He wishes to signify the existential freedom from every necessity of motion or repose, the realization of existence as relation, the freedom of love as the mode of the fullness of existence.

Only relation can include the rapture of motion-quest-pursuance and the fullness of repose as an existential event—perhaps this is what Paul indicates with his words: "We all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:18), "For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face" (1 Cor 13:12).

Even while existing within the confines of createdness, the human person is experiencing a part of the fascinating experience of relation

[3] *Amb.* PG 91, 1304D. -1308 AB.—Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator,* Lund 1965 p. 147ff.

[4] See footnote 2 and Christos Yannaras, *Person and Eros* § 33.—*Relational Ontology* 20.3.4.

and relationship, of the unlimited cognitive dynamics of relation, of its always incomplete fullness—the human person is experiencing in its interpersonal relationships some, perhaps only a few but nonetheless revealing, instances of a freedom from time, space, deterioration.

There are also other ontological approaches about our hopes hereafter that can be found in the texts of St Maximus, both direct and indirect approaches. For example, the possibility that what we term in our language as "hell" could refer to man's free choice not to exist. If the foundation of existing is the relationship with God, and the "logical" relationship (which, to be logical-personal, must be free) constitutes the logical-personal existence, then this relationship-existence can be either accepted or even rejected, leading to nonexistence.

Hell, says Maximus, is the negation to participate in the "κυρίως εἶναι" and in the "εὖ εἶναι" and the "ἀεὶ εἶναι"[5]: the free self-exclusion from existence, from relation-participation in being, the negation of the relationship and as such the negation of existing, of existence. And this voluntary nonexistence as a deprivation and loss of the gift of deification can perhaps only be signified symbolically in language with the image of endless torture, of suffering and weeping.

Thereby is the unbearable scandal dispelled, that a God who is love preserves His deniers eternally in existence only to see them suffer hopelessly.

More generally, Maximus' ontological perspective on the restoration (ἀποκατάστασις) of "the whole of nature" in the "freedom of the glory of God's children," the difference between his perspective and one of Origen or of Gregory or Nyssa, is one of the most exciting challenges for an ontological clarification of the ecclesial testimony. A brief conference paper does not suffice but merely remind us of pendencies that might be worth the attention of systematic research. St Maximus' example allows us to conclude that the ecclesial experience's testimony was not finitely completed in a glorious past, but is perpetually realized with the dynamics of gradually fuller expressive capabilities, especially in the field of ontological hermeneutics' language.

[5] *Amb.* PG 91, 1325B.—Also see: John Zizioulas, "Eschatology and Existence" (Εσχατολογία καὶ ὕπαρξη), *Synaxis* n. 121/2012, p. 48.

It is very likely that criteria and prerequisites for an illumination of crucial hermeneutic pendencies concerning our hopes hereafter can be drawn from St Maximus' work. Completing this presentation, I would like to indicatively cite some of these pendencies:

1. If by the term "person" (πρόσωπον) we define existence as an—at least relative—freedom of self-determination, then how can we accept that "there is no repentance after death"? Can there be a personal being without the capability of constituting relation or of negating relation? Does man cease to be a person after death, is he turned into an impersonal, brutish being of monomodal predetermination?
2. Should we perhaps understand our condition after death as a freedom from the existential preconditions of createdness, a freedom from the existential dilemmas of the necessities that govern created nature? That is, a freedom from repentance or non-repentance, a freedom of transition from glory to glory?
3. If we answer affirmatively to the previous question, how can we interpret ontologically the ecclesial angelology and daemonology? Are angels and demons personal beings? If so, how can the "unchangeable" character of their nature be interpreted? Are they of a created or an uncreated nature? If they are created, which existential restrictions of createdness govern their nature and how can these restrictions be withdrawn in the case of angels, without the angelic nature ever having been assimilated by God?
4. If motion and time are withdrawn after death, why does judgement reside in the "future," and why is the resurrection of the dead "expected"? Why should the semantics of our hopes be limited to the logic of the constrains of the created world? What indications does the ecclesial testimony allow for an ontological interpretation of the "hope within us," judging from the behavior of Christ's physical body after his Resurrection and on the event of his Ascension?

These are articulated with a brevity that does not exclude risk.

VII

Contemporary Readings

A Contemporary Synthesis of St Maximus' Theology: The Work of Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae

Calinic Berger

To fully appreciate the influence of St Maximus the Confessor in contemporary Orthodox theology, one cannot overlook the contribution of Father Dumitru Stăniloae (1903-1993). Stăniloae's engagement with the writings of St Maximus spanned decades, from the 1940s to the 1990s, during which time he translated and published all of the saint's major works: the *Mystagogia* (in 1944);[1] *On the Lord's Prayer,* the *Ascetic Discourse,* the *Chapters on Love,* the *Gnostic Chapters,* and the *Questions and Doubts* (all in 1947);[2] the *Answers to Thalassius* (in 1948);[3] the *Ambigua to John and Thomas* (in 1983);[4] and finally, the *Epistles*, and the complete *Shorter Theological and Polemical Works* (all in 1990).[5] Stăniloae provided these texts with thorough introductions and extensive annotations, some of which have been translated into French and Modern Greek,[6] and which not only present information from modern scholarship but also his own, often inspired, reflections.

[1] *Revista Teologică* 34:3-4 (1944) 166-181; 34:7-8 (1944) 335-356. As Ioan I.Ică, Jr., has noted, Stăniloae's translation of the *Mystagogia* in *Revistă Teologică* inexplicably was never reprinted, though Fr. Stăniloae had prepared a substantial introduction and 85 notes for the text, which were subsequently published in the modern Greek edition (see below, n. 6). See diac. Ioan I.Ică, Jr., *De la Dionisie Areopagitul la Simeon al Tesalonicului: integral comentariilor liturgice byzantine. Studii şi texte* (Sibiu: Editura Deisis, 2011), 178 n. 12.

[2] *Filocalia*, v. 2 (Sibiu: Tipografia Arhidiecezană, 1947).

[3] *Filocalia*, v. 3 (Sibiu: Tipografia Arhidiecezană, 1948).

[4] *Sf. Maxim Mărturisitorul, Scrieri, Partea I. Ambigua.* PSB vol. 80 (Bucureşti: Editura Institutului Biblic, 1983).

[5] *Sf. Maxim Mărturisitorul, Scrieri, Partea a II-a. Scrieri şi epistole hristologice şi duhovniceşti.* PSB vol. 82 (Bucureşti: Editura Institutului Biblic, 1990).

[6] "Commentaire des Ambigua," translated by Père Aurel Grigoras, in *Saint Maxime le Confesseur: Ambigua.* Trans. Emmanuel Ponsoye (Paris: Les Éditions de l'Ancre, 1994). Two

This work of translation and annotation—an enormous achievement in itself—had a decisive influence on Stăniloae's own theological work, in which the thought of the Saint is prominent and his writings are cited more than those of any other Church Father. Such is evident already in his early Christological monograph, *Jesus Christ or the Restoration of Man*, published in 1943,[7] as it is in his other major works, published decades later—*Orthodox Dogmatic Theology* (1978),[8] *Orthodox Spirituality* (1981),[9] and *Spirituality and Communion in the Orthodox Liturgy* (1986), *God and Man* (1990),[10] and *The Immortal Image of God* (1995).[11] Additionally, St Maximus figures notably in several important articles, culminating in his major study, *The Christology of St. Maximus the Confessor* (1990).[12] Certainly, Stăniloae's remarkable production and dedication to St Maximus places him in an elite group of scholars.

The Discovery and Significance of St Maximus in Stăniloae's Theological Project

Stăniloae's devotion to the Confessor cannot be properly appreciated or understood outside of the overall goal and context of his own theological work. Fr. Stăniloae was first and foremost a man of the Church; his work was driven by the needs of the Church—in particular in its efforts to confront the cultural and secular trends of the mod-

volumes in the modern Greek patristic collection *Epi tas Pigas* (edited by Panagiotis Nellas) have included Stăniloae's annotations and introductions: *Mystagogia tou hagiou Maximuou tou Homologetou*. Trans. Ignatios Sakalis (Athens: Apostolike Diakonia, 1973); and, although in a shortened form, in the *Ambigua: Philosophika kai Theologika Erotema. Peri Diaphoron Aporion ton Agion Dionysiou kai Gregoriou*. Trans. Ignatios Sakalis (Athens: Apostolike Diakonia, 1978).

[7] *Iisus Hristos sau Restaurarea omului*. 2nd Ed. (Craiova: Editura Omniscop, 1993). Henceforth cited as *Restaurarea*.

[8] All citations below (as TDO) will reference both the Romanian version and English translation (ET), *The Experience of God*, 3 vols. Trans. Ioan Ionită and Robert Barringer (Brookline: Holy Cross Press, 1994-2011).

[9] All citations below (as SO) will reference both the Romanian version (1992) and English translation (ET), *Orthodox Spirituality*. Trans. Archim. Jerome (Newville) and Otilia Kloos (St. Tikhon's Press, 2002).

[10] *Omul şi Dumnezeu* in Dumitru Stăniloae, *Studii de Teologie Dogmatică Ortodoxă* (Editura Mitropoliei Olteniei: Craiova, 1991) 157-306.

[11] *Chipul nemuritor al lui Dumnezeu*, 2 vol. (Bucharest: Cristal, 1995).

[12] Published in Dumitru Stăniloae, *Studii de Teologie Dogmatică Ortodoxă* (Editura Mitropoliei Olteniei: Craiova, 1991) 12-154.

ern world—and fueled by his own quest to know God. Additionally, the centrality he accorded to St Maximus must be seen in relation to several prior events in Stăniloae's life, not the least of which was his discovery of the writings of St Gregory Palamas and the *Philokalia*.

Stăniloae's quest to know God began very early. He was raised in a deeply religious family and already by age ten had read the entire Bible and wanted to become a priest. So, perhaps the first key event affecting his theological formation was the fact that he dropped out of seminary[13] because he found the seminary instruction of his day unsatisfying and divorced from any living experience. However, under the influence of Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan, he returned, finished his licentiate, and was sent abroad for studies in Athens and Germany.

In Athens, Stăniloae discovered the writings of St Gregory Palamas[14] and recognized in them a patristic, theological expression of what he was seeking: a theology based on living experience. In the writings of Palamas, Stăniloae wrote, "I met a God who comes towards man, opens Himself to him like light, through prayer. He fills him with His energies, yet remains incommunicable ... incomprehensible, apophatic."[15] From 1927 to 1929 Stăniloae visited libraries through Europe, collecting copies of manuscripts with writings of St Gregory Palamas, all of which were unpublished.[16] He spent ten years laboring over them, the fruit of which was a major monograph in 1938,[17] but also a detailed knowledge of Pala-

[13] He went to study literature at the University of Bucharest for two years, 1923-24. A useful biography in English is Maceij Bielawski, *The Philokalical Vision of the World in the Theology of Dumitru Stăniloae* (Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo Homini, 1997) 15-43.

[14] This was most likely through the person and work of Professor Gregory Papamichail (1874-1956), though the latter did not take up the topic of the essence/energies distinction (see Bielawksi, 21). Stăniloae cites Papamichail in several places in his book on Gregory Palamas (e.g., *Viaţa*, 41, 152, 162). About the work of Papamichail, see Ioan I. Ică, Jr., *Grigorie Palama. Scrieri I. Tomosure dogmatice, viaţa, slujba*. (Sibiu: Deisis, 2009) 19.

[15] Cited in Bielawski, *op. cit.*, 27. In the preface to his *Life and Teachings of St. Gregory Palamas*, Stăniloae emphasizes the importance of the Orthodox doctrine of the uncreated energies (which present a living, intimate God who unites Himself to man through His grace) in confronting the secularizing trend of modernity, which has as its basis a distant God, seen as an abstract entity, impersonal and devoid of love.

[16] For example, in Paris he obtained photographs of the codex *Coislinianus graecus* 100, containing exclusively the writings of Palamas (Ică, *Grigorie Palama*, 27-29).

[17] *Viaţa şi Învăţătura Sfîntului Grigorie Palama* [*The Life and Teaching of St. Gregory Palamas*] (Sibiu, 1938). Citations here are from the second edition (Bucureşti: Editura Scripta, 1993). Prior to the monograph, Stăniloae had published an article and an ample translation of Palamas in the *Anuarul Academiei Teologice Andreiane* (v. 6, 1929-30, 52-72, and v. 9, 1932-33, 5-70).

mite theology[18] that would remain an essential feature of his thought for the duration of his career.

Sometime in the late 1930s, Stăniloae was privy to the rediscovery of the *Philokalia* in Romania.[19] This occurred first through the writer and theologian, Nichifor Crainic,[20] who had made a great study of Orthodox mysticism,[21] and later through two of Stăniloae's students who returned from Mount Athos with the Greek version of St Nicodemus.[22]

During this period, Stăniloae was not only the rector of the Theological Academy in Sibiu, but also the editor of a major newspaper, *Telegraful Român*,[23] in which he engaged in a sustained debate through the 1930s with another leading intellectual, Lucian Blaga, over the nature of Romanian culture, religion, and mysticism.[24] Blaga's group sought to de-Christianize these categories entirely.

[18] Stăniloae's work with the manuscripts helped clarify certain dates and events in the life of Palamas (Bielawski, 27-28), and corroborate Symeon the New Theologian's authorship of an important hesychastic manual (*Viața*, 39-47, esp. 41, 46-7; this is also referred to in his *Orthodox Spirituality*, 218, ET 263).

[19] For details on Stăniloae's discovery of the texts, his scholarly methodology in translating, and the various circles interested in the *Philokalia* in Romania at that time (first at the Brâncoveanu Monastery and later in the "Burning Bush" movement), see Ioan I. Ică, Jr., "Filocalia de la Sibiu, 1946-1948, în fața României soveitizate," in *Filotei Sinaitul. Trezia minții și cerul inimii* (Sibiu: Deisis, 2009) 5-26.

[20] Stăniloae notes that Crainic had showed him the manuscript (*Viața*, 39, n. 2), which places Stăniloae's exposure to the writings before 1938, though he did not obtain the Greek version until after that. On Crainic, see Ioan I. Ică, Jr., *Nichifor Crainic. Cursurile de mistică* (Sibiu: Deisis, 2010) 736 pp. In 1937 Crainic had received a typed version of the *Philokalia* in Romanian, interspersed with Paisian teachings, but it was unpublishable due to the poor translation (Ică, *Crainic*, 57-8).

[21] Crainic's course in mysticism, taught at the University of Bucharest, formed the basis of Stăniloae's course, which he greatly enriched in content and thought with his vast knowledge of the writings of the *Philokalia*, St Maximus, and St Gregory Palamas, all placed in dialogue with contemporary thought, and finally published as his *Orthodox Spirituality* in 1981 (see Ică, *Crainic*, 86-7).

[22] The students were hieromonks Arsenie Boca and Seraphim Popescu. The *Philokalia* was that published by Panagiotis Tzelatis in Athens, 1893. Stăniloae had three older, yet incomplete, renditions of the first volume in Romanian, which he referred to for help with obscure passages (see Ică, "Filocalia," 9-10, n. 5).

[23] He was rector of the Andreina Theological Academy in Sibiu from 1936 to1946 (professor from 1929 to 1936) and editor of *Telegraful Român* from 1934 to 1945, for which he wrote more than 350 articles.

[24] These articles were collected and published as *Poziția d-lui Lucian Blaga față de Creștinism și Ortodoxie* (Sibiu, 1942).

In this context, Stăniloae immediately realized the importance of the *Philokalia* in countering the popularization of "new religious 'experiences'" which were subjective, ambiguous, directionless and "held to be a value in themselves"[25]—in other words, as exactly the antidote to the false mysticism popularized by the intelligentsia. The writings of the *Philokalia*, and specifically those of St Maximus,[26] provided an authentic Christian mysticism which was based on the patristic science of the soul, tested through generations, and which properly assessed the value of the world. Moreover, he saw its value not only for monastics but for all Christians, since its writings presented a "practical teaching of the Orthodox way of life" which "can transform us day to day," give us "step by step" guidance towards a definitive goal of transforming passions into virtues, which culminate in love and union with God. The content of the *Philokalia* was therefore essential for the life of the Church, since it could provide a "precise and specifically Orthodox content to preaching and Christian living."[27] So important did Stăniloae see these writings he "could not wait ten or even a hundred years" that it might take for the critical editions of the writings to be compiled.[28] He began translating immediately, sometime in 1943. This would eventually result in his life-long project of producing the twelve volumes of the expanded and richly-annotated Romanian *Filocalia*.[29]

However, the Greek *Philokalia* was not Stăniloae's first exposure to St Maximus,[30] nor can it entirely explain his grasping of the Saint's importance and subsequent dedication to his writings. Indeed, through the 1930s, the prevailing scholarly opinion (which Stăniloae knew

[25] Stăniloae, Preface, *Filocalia*, vol. 1, 11.

[26] *ibid.*, 10 n. 2.

[27] *ibid.*, 7-9.

[28] Stăniloae set out on this task systematically, consulting the scholarship of his day, which led him to reassign authorship and re-order the writings chronologically. He lamented the fact that critical editions did not exist, except for Diadochus and Evagrius, but even these were unobtainable in the circumstances of the day (Preface, *Filocalia*, vol. 1, 7).

[29] Published in twelve volumes, 1946-1991. For an overview of the contents of Stăniloae's *Philokalia*, see Maciej Bielawski, "Dumitru Stăniloae and His *Philokalia*," in L. Turcescu (ed.), *Dumitru Stăniloae: Tradition and Modernity in Theology* (Portland: The Center for Romanian Studies, 2002) 25-52.

[30] St Maximus was cited, albeit briefly, in Crainic's *Course on Mysticism* (see Ică, *Crainic*, 189, 212) and also in Stăniloae's monograph on St Gregory Palamas (*Viața*, 68-9).

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well[31]), was that St Maximus was "devoid of originality."[32] Yet in 1944 Stăniloae published a translation of the *Mystagogia*. It is in the preface of this translation that Stăniloae mentions the "beautiful study" of Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Kosmische Liturgie*, published in 1941, which went against the poor estimation of St Maximus then *en vogue* and demonstrated the Saint's "majestic and personal synthesis of the great philosophical currents of antiquity, as well as the principles of patristic thought."[33] Stăniloae recognized the Saint's profound importance in providing a patristic psychology and mysticism, and a theological foundation for the integration of the transcendent and communal aspects of the world and the Church, which he saw preserved in Orthodoxy and permeating the soul of Romanian culture.[34] Significantly, in this preface he also tells us that he had ready for publication at that time more than half of the Saint's *corpus* (by 1944, when he was but 40 years of age). These translations would comprise the second and third volumes of the Romanian *Philokalia*, which doubled the allocation of the Saint's writings as compared to the Greek collection.[35] Even before the appearance of the *Mystagogia*, however, Stăniloae had published his Christological monograph, *Jesus Christ or the Restoration of Man* (1943), that was heavily indebted to St Maximus. Therefore, between 1941 (the appearance of von Balthasar's book) and January 1947 when the new regime forcibly transferred him from Sibiu to Bucharest (having removed him as dean of the Theological Academy and editor of *Telegraful Român*), Stăniloae had translated half of the corpus of St Maximus, and published a major Christological monograph incorpo-

[31] He mentions all significant studies in *Revista Teologică* 34 (1944) 164. In the preface to *Filocalia*, v. 2 (the first containing the writings of the Confessor), Stăniloae analyzes this scholarship briefly and credits von Balthasar for changing the established opinion of St Maximus, demonstrating his original synthesis of Evagrius and Dionysius (11 n. 3). He also notes von Balthasar's work in establishing a proper chronological order of the Saint's writings and calls his *Die gnostischen Centurien de Maximus Confessor* (1941) "remarkable" (13 n. 3). It is perhaps noteworthy that Stăniloae's tradition of providing his translations of patristic texts with rich annotations begins with the *Gnostic Centuries* of St Maximus in *Filocalia* v. 2, precisely in dialogue with von Balthasar's work.

[32] Preface, *Filocalia* v. 2, 10.

[33] *Revista Teologică* 34 (1944) 164.

[34] He mentions specifically the poem, "Mioriţa."

[35] To the 1893 Greek version, the Romanian added the *Liber asceticus*, *Quaestiones et dubia*, and the *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*. Ică notes that this was the first complete translation of the latter into a modern language ("Filocalia," 13).

rating his thought, as well as the first volume of the *Philokalia*.[36] That such accomplishments took place in such a short period, and in the midst of great upheaval in Romania and personal tragedy (the death of his young daughter in April 1945), is truly astonishing.[37]

These details are important because only within the context of his goal of creating a living theology and a vibrant spiritual life in the Church can we understand the place of St Maximus in Stăniloae's work. His discovery of St Maximus came at the apex of his work on St Gregory Palamas, at the threshold of his work on the *Philokalia*, and in the midst of a struggle with a de-Christianizing culture and then government. Within this crucible, St Maximus provided the core of Stăniloae's synthesis: Palamas explicated theological aspect of our union with God through His uncreated energies, the *Philokalia* elucidated the human aspect by providing practical guidance in prayer and life, and St Maximus placed the path, the goal, the world, and the Church, in a synthetic and all-encompassing vision, which was notably and outstandingly Christocentric. Stăniloae turned to St Maximus' thought decisively, therefore, for a coherent Christological vision of the world, expressed at times with technical doctrinal precision, which could thereby act as a framework[38] to incorporate and evaluate contemporary theological insights and give guidance for social concerns.[39]

An Example of St Maximus in Stăniloae's Methodology: Kenosis in Fr. Sergius Bulgakov

We are now in a position to briefly analyze the definitive influence of St Maximus in Stăniloae's own theological writings, which has been noted by several scholars[40] and can even be said to distinguish him from other Orthodox theologians engaged in the same overall project

[36] The *Filocalia* appeared only after he left Sibiu.

[37] Here we should note his touching dedication of the first volume of the Romania *Filocalia*: "Lord, accept the work of this translation as a prayer for the soul of my precious child, Mioara."

[38] "The mysticism of Saint Maximus is a Christological mysticism, without ceasing to be an all-encompassing system, in which the world enters and is redeemed for all eternity in all its splendor." (Intro, *Filocalia* 2:23).

[39] *Revista Teologică*, 34:3-4 (1944) 166.

[40] Notably, Andrew Louth, who notes the many contributions of Stăniloae in "Recent Research on St Maximus the Confessor: A Survey," *SVTQ* 42 (1998) 67-84; Bielawski (in Turcescu, *op. cit.*, 38, n. 34) states: "It would be really useful to add one more chapter about Stăniloae to the excellent book of Aidan Nichols, *Byzantine Gospel*."

of making theology both relevant and patristically grounded. As noted above, the definitive influence of St Maximus is already evident in his early Christological study, *Jesus Christ or the Restoration of Man* (1943),[41] from which we will take an example.

In his methodology, Stăniloae at times will compare the Christological and philosophical positions of his contemporaries directly to those of St Maximus.[42] For example, Stăniloae analyzes at length the Christology of Fr. Sergius Bulgakov, as expressed in his 1933 monograph, *Agnets Bozhii*.[43] Bulgakov did not read St Maximus carefully,[44] had a low estimation of the Saint's theology,[45] and openly disagreed with St Maximus over the issue of gnomic will in Christ.[46] Stăniloae respected Bulgakov, yet took exception to many of his views, which we cannot address here.[47] One such view, not deemed controversial by others,[48] was Bulgakov's notion of *kenosis*. A brief overview of Stăniloae's analysis of the latter can be utilized to illustrate Stăniloae's methodology.

According to Bulgakov, in the *kenosis*, the Word of God laid aside His divine properties and energies (such as His omnipotence, glory,

[41] As Stăniloae himself says, the work "is not a book of dogmatics, strictly speaking" but rather "a book of thought, of Christian meditation in the broad sense," seeking to bring the ever-contemporary person of Jesus into the questions and struggles of the day. Stăniloae describes his methodology as taking the dogmas of the Fathers as "an unchanging axis" around which the "flux" of various questions can be arranged, thereby allowing theology to be "fresh, contemporary, speaking to each time in its language," while allowing it simultaneously to "maintain itself firmly connected with the tradition of the Church" (*Restaurarea*, Preface, 7-8).

[42] For example, *Restaurarea*, chs. 5 and 6, *passim*.

[43] Sergius Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*. English trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids: Eerdmanns, 2008). See also, Rowan Williams, *Sergii Bulgakov. Towards a Russian Political Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999). On Bulgakov, most recently: Nikolai Sakharov, "Essential Bulgakov: His Ideas about Sophia, the Trinity and Christ," *SVTQ* 55:2 (2011) 165-208. Unless noted, all citations below will be referenced to Jakim's translation.

[44] This is evident from his paucity of citations. His most extensive inclusion of St Maximus is in a brief overview of Monothelitism (*The Lamb of God*, 74-82).

[45] This perhaps reflected the scholarship of the day. He claims that St Maximus did not possess "an integral theological doctrine, especially on the most important questions, in particular the question of how the simultaneous operation of the two wills in Christ is possible. Although he affirms the future dogma, he does so without theological preparation, and he is far from being firm and consistent in applying it" (*The Lamb of God*, 81).

[46] *Lamb of God*, 245-6, n. 19.

[47] Such as his ambiguous notion of person being "uncreated" and variously decoupled from nature.

[48] E.g., Sakharov, who is not shy to criticize Bulgakov over other issues, says "Bulgakov's most significant contribution comes from his interpretation of Christ's kenosis" (*art. cit.*, 193).

etc.)[49] and, most importantly, His divine self-consciousness, remaining God objectively in nature, but not in activity.[50] Using St Maximus, Stăniloae comes to completely different conclusions: in the Incarnation, the Word of God did not leave aside self-consciousness, albeit as man this developed according to human nature.[51] In this development, the lack of gnomic will directly follows from the fact that the human nature of Christ was not an hypostasis independent from the Word[52]—and so His human will did not deliberate in a separate, or "autonomous," manner from Him, its divine subject. Nor did the Word Incarnate lay aside His divine attributes,[53] but manifested them according to the receptivity of each person, not in an overwhelming manner which would prevent communion between Him and his fellow human beings, but just enough to reveal His identity. In this, the *kenosis* revealed that divine omnipotence does not consist primarily in overwhelming power, but in love.[54]

[49] E.g., "[T]he Man who is also the pre-eternal God stops having His divinity for Himself, as it were: He retains only the nature of Divinity, not its glory" (*Lamb of God*, 224). "By this act the Second hypostasis removes from Himself His proper hypostatic will or energy while retaining His filial obedience by keeping inactive His proper hypostatic actuality" (*Lamb of God*, 225).

[50] "That is, the hypostasis of the Logos, ceasing to be a divine hypostasis for Himself while remaining such in His objective being, becomes a *human hypostasis*: His consciousness of self is realized through human consciousness" (*Lamb of God*, 229; see also 233, 243). He remained God in activity for the Trinity and the world, but not "for Himself."

[51] E.g., "Jesus did not waffle in His knowledge as do other people, there is not seen in Him a progress or correction in what He said. All is ultimate truth, clear, absolutely certain, from the first moment of His appearance in the public arena. It is divine vision and knowledge, framed in human forms of knowledge and expression. These forms are thus those which progress with age, the natural human capacity to grasp and render divine wisdom. The activities of both natures meet in a whole, without the light of divine knowledge replacing the organ of human knowledge and its activity" (*Restaurarea*, 144-5).

[52] See his discussion in this regard, almost totally indebted to St Maximus, in *Restaurarea*, 172-84.

[53] See his many citations of St Maximus, *Restaurarea*, 141, n.1. For example, "Neither of the natures that were a hypostasis are activated in a manner separate from the other. Through each the other is made evident. Being truly both one and the other, as God He was He who moves His humanity, whereas as man He was He who uncovers His own divinity. He suffered divinely, so to speak, thus suffering voluntarily, for He was not a simple (ψιλὸς) man, and performed miracles humanly, thus performing them through the body, for He was not a naked (γυμνὸς) God" (PG 91:100D and also, 1056A); "Neither does He do human things humanly. For He does them through His omnipotent will, not subject to any necessity. His suffering He endured not according to some punishment, as with us, but according to the kenosis of the Word incarnate for us" (PG 91:120B).

[54] *Restaurarea*, 147-8 (with several citations from the *Cent. Gnost.*), and 152-4.

Stăniloae's analysis of Bulgakov's *kenosis* theory also demonstrates a key characteristic of his synthesis: the constant weaving together of St Maximus' thought with that of St Gregory Palamas. Bulgakov found nineteenth-century Protestant notions of *kenosis* to be, in his own words, "rather orthodox," and based his own theory on them.[55] Stăniloae, on the other hand, sees them as impoverishing the notion of the Incarnation, for it is precisely by doing human things divinely and divine things through His human nature that the uncreated energy of God flows in and through Christ to all human nature and thereby to all creation.[56]

Stăniloae's Use of St Maximus' Doctrine of the Logos-*logoi*

As a final example, we will briefly look at Fr. Stăniloae's use of a specific doctrine of St Maximus. Readers of Fr. Stăniloae's work cannot but take note of his widespread and systematic use of Maximus' doctrine of the *logoi*, which he closely relates to doctrine of the uncreated energies of St Gregory Palamas. Here we will make a few observations of how Stăniloae incorporates and synthesizes these doctrines.

First, while Stăniloae maintains the ontological connection established by St Maximus between the one Logos and the many *logoi* in his overall doctrine of participation, he creatively draws out the implications contained in the Confessor's teaching that the one Logos is the hypostatic or *personal* Logos of God.[57] Due to this fact, in Stăniloae's view, the *logoi* of things possess ontological and existential (that is, *personal*) dimensions simultaneously. From the ontological perspective, the *logoi* are the unchanging models and goals of all things, according to which God creates, sustains, and guides them to Himself.[58] The *logoi* pre-exist in an eternal, undifferentiated, and unchanging unity in God the Logos,[59] and without departing from this simple unity, become differentiated and dynamic in the act of creation.[60] More specifically, they are divine "wills" or the "thoughts of God, in conformity to which things are brought into existence through the divine will."[61] Thus, even from the ontological perspective, Stăniloae sees the *logoi* implying a *personal* God, since each being is created "at the appropriate time" and given a destiny by God, which is union with Himself.[62] From the existential perspective, Stăniloae sees a personal God revealed by the multiple "meanings" which each of the *logoi* mediate, which are specific inten-

[55] *Lamb of God*, 220, n. 12.

[56] *Restaurarea*, 154.

[57] E.g., "Moreover, would he not also perceive that the many logoi are one Logos, seeing that all things are relating to Him without being confused with Him, who is the essentially and personally distinct (ἐνούσιόν τε καὶ ἐνυπόστατον) Logos of God the Father, the origin and cause of all things..." (*Amb.* 7.15, PG 91:1077CD).

[58] See especially, *Amb* 7.15-20, 1077C-1081D.

[59] E.g., "Strictly speaking, the divine logoi do not subsist in the divine Logos in a distinct [i.e. differentiated] manner" (Comment on Amb 7.16, 1080AC, RT 81, n. 43). In St Maximus: "In God the logoi of all things are steadfastly fixed." (*Amb* 7.19, 1081A); "...the principles [λόγοι] ... which preexist uniformly [μονοειδῶς] in him" (*Ad Thal.* 60, PG 90:625A); "The logoi of all the beings that exist essentially ... pre-exist and are immovably fixed in God ... these logoi are clearly incorruptible" (Amb 42.15, 91:1329A, C). See also *Amb* 10.120, 1205C. Cf., Dionysius, DN 5.8, PG 3:824C: "... and all the exemplars [παραδείγματα] of existent things must pre-exist under the form of one super-essential unity [μίαν ὑπερούσιον ἕνωσιν] ... And we give the name of 'exemplars' to those laws [λόγοι] which, pre-existent in God as an unity, produce the essences of things ...".

[60] In St Maximus, e.g.: "... the one Logos is many logoi and the many are One. According to the creative and sustaining procession of the One to individual beings... the One is many" (*Amb* 7.20, 91:1081C); "...every divine energy indicates through itself the whole of God, indivisibly present in each particular thing, according to the logos through which that thing exists in its own way... [God] is truly all things in all things, *never going out of His own indivisible simplicity* (*Amb* 22.3, 91:1257BC). Cf. Dionysius, DN 4.13 "[He is in] all things through a super-essential and ecstatic power whereby *He yet stays within Himself...*".

[61] Introduction, *Ambigua*, 28. St Maximus, following Dionysius, calls the *logoi* "wills" [θελήματα] (Amb. 7.24, 91:1085BC; DN 5.8, 824C). In Stăniloae's view, "the logoi of things, existing before the ages, do not have self-existence, but are potential *logoi* in God or in the supreme Logos. The entities of the world do not thereby have pre-existence" (Note on Amb. 7.16, 91:1080AB, 80 n. 42). This is in contrast to Origenist doctrine. (St Maximus makes the potential/actual distinction explicit in *Amb* 7.19, 1081AB.) The *logoi*, existing in a unity in the one Logos, only pre-exist as "possibilities," which are made known in the act of creation, which is an act of the divine will—and thus, the logoi "do not move themselves towards material existence," i.e. as if they were self-existent (ibid., 81, n.43). Stăniloae continues: "This doctrine of the divine logoi of things connects these logoi to the divine will.... The logoi of creatures thus are eternal, because nothing temporal exists in God, but at the same time they do not belong to His essence, but are expressions of His will..." (Comment on Amb 7.17, 91:1080CD, 82, n. 45).

[62] See Introduction, *Ambigua*, 29. Elsewhere, Stăniloae writes, "God sees and wills in the logoi the movement and goal of things, which is their deification. But as the Fathers affirm the paradoxical eternal existence of the divine logoi and their dependence on the divine will, so St Maximus unites the paradox of the goal of God for those creatures with their will to advance, or not, towards that goal. In this way, St Maximus avoids the conclusion of the apocatastasis.... These two paradoxes have something in common: both imply divine freedom, or a *personal God*. At the same time, they make possible the existence of free, personal creatures..." (Comment on Amb 7.17, 91:1080CD, 82, n. 44, emphasis mine). "The one Logos, multiplied in the many logoi of creatures... must be understood both as a hypostatic Word... and as a *personal presence* [in creatures] of infinite intensity and richness" (Comment on Amb 7.20, 91:1081C, 85, n. 50, emphasis mine).

tions and words of God directed towards each, individual believer.[63] The "meaning" always proceeds from the logos and is never detached from it, yet reveals an always deeper dimension, or new, personal aspect of communication between God and man through things.[64]

One consequence of Stăniloae's personal-ontological interpretation of the *logoi* is that the contemplation of nature, which is the ability to see the *logoi* of things unaffected and undistorted by passionate attachment, becomes clearly a form of personal dialogue between God and the human person.[65] Through ascetic purification and the seeking of the *logoi*, man sees the thoughts and "loving intentions"[66] of God personally directed to him. Since they are rooted in the personal Logos, the *logoi* foster personal dialogue, ultimately conveying God's love to us and stimulating our love for God.[67] Without this existential-dialogical aspect, the world itself would have no meaning.[68]

Stăniloae's emphasis on the *personal* aspect of the Logos-*logoi* doctrine highlights his notion that "person," or interpersonal communion, is always the goal (of the contemplation of nature), and "nature" is the means and irreducible ground of this communion. In this manner, the Logos-*logoi* doctrine allows Fr. Stăniloae to establish a theological foundation for an ascetic spirituality which leaves no aspect of reality outside of the divine-human dialogue.[69]

The *Logoi* and the Uncreated Energies

Another important aspect of Staniloae's utilization of St Maximus' thought is his integration of the Saint's *logoi* doctrine with that of the

[63] For Stăniloae's explanation of the distinction between "reason" (λόγος, *raţiune*) and "meaning" (νόημα, *sens*), see TDO 1:238-9ff, ET 2:29ff. The former (*logos*) is apprehended primarily through human reason, whereas the latter (*meaning*) through a higher human faculty ("intuition") which includes yet transcends reason, involving the human will and belonging "more properly to the domain of relations between the human person and the Divine Person" (TDO 1:20, ET 1:13).

[64] TDO 1:241, ET 2:34.

[65] See TDO 1:237-46, ET 2:27-43, and ch. 24 of his *Orthodox Spirituality*, "The Contemplation of God in Creation" (SO 164-183, ET 203-23).

[66] E.g, TDO vol. 1, 245, ET vol. 2, 40-1.

[67] SO 175, 177-8; ET 214, 217.

[68] E.g., TDO 1:242, ET 2:35.

[69] One can see the Logos-*logoi* doctrine implicitly present in many of his reflections as well; for example, the section entitled, "The knowledge of God in the concrete circumstances of life," TDO 1:99-103, ET 1:117-122.

uncreated energies as elaborated by St Gregory Palamas, an issue which has yet to receive a definitive clarity among St Maximus' many commentators.[70] Stăniloae deftly integrates the *logoi* and uncreated energies, all the while remaining within the framework established for the *logoi* by St Maximus. It could be said that Stăniloae sees the *logoi* and energies as complementary, which can be demonstrated by drawing attention to some of Stăniloae's basic distinctions in this regard.

First, each logos, while clearly pre-existing and uncreated, is always identifiable through a *specific* created thing or *specific* attribute of God.[71] The uncreated energies, on the other hand, are not integrally connected to specific beings or attributes. Therefore, the *logoi*, to an extent, have become intelligible through their manifestation in particulars; the energies are not associated with particulars and thus remain beyond intelligibility.[72] However, this does not mean that uncreated energies cannot be mediated through created things.[73]

[70] The issue is treated very briefly by Lars Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos* (New York: SVS Press, 1985) 137-43; Vasilios Karayiannis, *Maxime le Confesseur: Essence et Énergies de Dieu* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1993) 215-22; and Jean-Claude Larchet, *La Théologie des Énergies Divines: Des origines à saint Jean Damascène* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2010) 392-5. Key texts from St Maximus on this question include: *Amb* 7.12, PG 91:1076A-1077B (energies, not *logoi*); *Amb* 7.15-21 PG 91:1077C-1084B (*logoi*, not energies); Amb 22.2, PG 91:1256D-1257C (both energies and *logoi*); *Amb* 42.14, PG 91:1328B-1329D (logoi); *Cap. Gnost.* I.47-50, 55, PG 90:1100C-1104C; II.60, 88, PG 90:1106A, 1120C. Thunberg (*op. cit.*, 140), J. Farrell (*Free Choice in St. Maximus the Confessor*, St. Tikhon's, 1989, 139), Karayiannis (*op. cit.*, 215) and Larchet (*op. cit.*, 395) cite the one text that includes both logoi and energies (*Amb* 22.2, 91.1257AB) —a text not cited by Balthasar, Sherwood, or Lossky, as notes Karayiannis, *op. cit.*, 219 n. 285.

[71] Of course, each created being has a pre-existing logos. Yet St Maximus also refers to the attributes of God—e.g., goodness and the other works which "did not begin in time" and exist "around God" and in which creatures participate by "grace"—as "logoi" (Cap. Gnost. 1.48-50, PG 90:1100C-1101B), the highest of which *logoi* is love (Amb 10.119, 91:1204D). On Stăniloae's view of the attributes, vis-à-vis God's essence, see TDO 1:86, 106, ET 1:102, 127.

[72] The *logoi* can in turn become transparent to the energies, as St Maximus states in *Amb.* 22.2 (PG 91:1257AB): "... the intellect, when naturally perceiving all the logoi that are in beings, in whose infinite number it contemplates the energies of God, reckons the differences of the divine energies which it perceives to be multiple and infinite." Commenting on this passage, Stăniloae notes: "St Maximus alternates in attributing to the mind the grasping of the divine energies or of the divine *logoi* of things; better said, the *logoi* are seized with the mind, but their energetic character with our entire being. The mind is the organ of knowledge of intelligible beings" (*Ambigua*, 226, n. 295).

[73] For example, "In its turn, nature can be the medium through which the believer receives divine grace or the beneficent uncreated energies" (TDO vol. 1, 224, ET vol. 2, 3). Also, elsewhere: "all the time that we know by concepts the divine energies in nature, we have the consciousness that these concepts are inadequate for the energies which are manifested through nature" (SO 195, ET 237).

Secondly, this distinction can be seen in the fact that the uncreated energies reveal the *logoi* in things and the attributes of God "in motion."[74] This becomes especially clear in natural contemplation, in which the ascent through created things to see their *logoi* occurs not only through ascetic purification, but with the help of "grace," which Stăniloae identifies as the uncreated energies.[75] The energies serve to *illumine* the mind to see the *logoi* in things and lead the mind through the logoi to their source, the one, personal Logos of God.[76]

The distinction between the *logoi* and energies is also evident in Stăniloae's description of the difference between contemplation in this present life and in the future age. In the present life, we look directly at created things and through them we behold their *logoi*, which reveal the one Logos. However, in the future age we will see the *logoi* directly in the one Logos, and created things only indirectly. This is not because the created things will disappear, but because they will become transparent in the infinite light of the uncreated energies.[77]

[74] "The operations [energies] which produce the attributes of the world are, therefore, bearers of certain attributes found in God in a simple and incomprehensible way. The operations [energies], therefore, are nothing other than the attributes of God in motion. ... God Himself is in each of these operations or energies, simultaneously whole, active, and beyond operation or movement. Thus His operations [energies] are what makes God's qualities visible in creatures, creating these with qualities analogous, but infinitely inferior, to God Himself, and then imparting His uncreated operations or attributes to them in higher and higher degrees" (TDO vol. 1, 104, ET vol. 1, 125).

[75] In general, Stăniloae equates "grace" and "uncreated energies." For example, he uses both the term "grace" and "uncreated energies" for the raising up of the human mind beyond its natural powers for the direct contemplation of God (Preface, *Filocalia* 2:22; also, Preface, *Filocalia* 3:21, n.3). It could be argued that St Maximus also equates "grace" and "divine energy," both of which convey "deification" after the cessation of natural powers (compare Cap. Gnost. 1.47, 90:1100C and 2.88, 90:1166D; Also compare, Amb 7.12, 91:1076CD with OTP 1, 91:33AB, RT PSB 80:193, and *On the Lord's Prayer*, 90:877A, ET *Philokalia* 2:287). In his description of Melchizedek, St Maximus refers to the "divine and uncreated grace, which exists eternally and is beyond all nature and time" (*Amb.* 10.44, 91:1141B), which Stăniloae notes alludes to Palamas' teaching long before Palamas (RT 141, n. 164).

[76] E.g., the energies assist us in seeing the *logoi*, pulling a person higher as by a "thread" (SO 176-7, ET 216).

[77] For example: "The *logoi* of things in the world, far from becoming unnecessary after the revealed vision of God, will help us understand the fecundity of the divine *Logos*. ... Of course, then [in the future age] we will look directly at the Sun of Righteousness, or at his light, and indirectly at the *logoi* of things; in the same way now [in the present age] we do not look at the direct light of the sun, but only see its blurred reflection from things. In other words, when we contemplate God directly we will contemplate the *logoi* of things in Him Himself, not in things, as now. Then we will see them so much better illuminated, more profoundly, more clearly" (SO 165, ET 204; referring to St Maximus, *Quest. ad Thal.* 55, PG 90.536). "Thus, if in this life we first behold created things and only through them, with great difficulty, God, then we will see first God and transparently in His light all created things, in a manner all the more clear and complete, and more deeply, than we see them in an earthly objectivity...". This light Stăniloae calls the "energies of God, more infinite than an ocean" (Comment on Cap. Gnost. 2.88, PG 90:1165D [ET *Philokalia* 2:160, a text in parallel with *Amb.* 7.12, 91:1077AB], *Filocalia*, 2:201, n.1). See also, Introduction, *Filocalia* 2:22-3.

A final note should be made regarding the fact that on a few occasions Stăniloae states that the *logoi* are uncreated energies.[78] These instances should be seen in their context: in each, Stăniloae is referring specifically to the creation and sustaining of things, which in his interpretation occurs through the divine will of God, in accordance with the *logoi*, and by means of the uncreated energies. By referring to the logoi as energies in this context, Stăniloae is not disregarding the distinction between the *logoi* and the divine energies, which is clearly articulated and maintained throughout his works. Instead, he is emphasizing that the *logoi*, as "divine wills" or "creative, volitional powers of God"[79] thereby also possess an "energetic character."[80] Certainly, St Maximus does not call the *logoi* "energies" and neither does he assign them a directly energetic aspect, though he does refer to the *logoi* as θελήματα, citing Dionysius.[81] Therefore, it would appear that, in this instance (of assigning an energetic character to the *logoi* as θελήματα, and thereby calling them "energies"), Stăniloae is interpreting the *logoi* not entirely based on the Confessor's own writings, but also in the light of Dionysius.[82]

[78] These are very few, e.g.: his introduction to the *Ambigua*, 29; his comment on Amb. 22 (226, n. 295); and SO 319, ET 374.

[79] Stăniloae writes, "This doctrine of the divine logoi of things connects these logoi to the divine will. Thus Dionysius the Areopagite (DN 5:8, PG 3:824C) affirmed that the logoi are divine wills.... The logoi are not... inert models, but creative, volitional powers of God, which imply the thought of the models of things. The logoi of creatures, though they are eternal, because nothing temporal exists in God, nevertheless do not belong to His nature, but are expressions of His will" (Note on Amb 7.17, 91:1080CD, 82, n. 45). To say that the *logoi* in this instance are "wills" or "powers" does not imply that they have an ontic existence. In a previous note, Stăniloae writes: "the logoi of things, existing before the ages, do not have self-existence, but are potential logoi in God or in the supreme Logos. The entities of the world do not thereby have pre-existence" (Comment on Amb. 7.16, 91:1080AB, 80 n. 42). And again: "... [the act by which] He creates [things] according to the model of the logoi pre-existent as possibilities (not as real existences), is an act of 'goodness' and thus of His will" (Comment on Amb. 7.16, 91:1081AB, 81, n. 43).

[80] Comment on Amb. 22 91:1257AB, p. 226, n. 295.

[81] *Amb.* 7.24, 91:1085B.

[82] Here is the passage from Dionysius (DN 5.8, PG 3:824C) which give the *logoi* an active/energetic aspect: "But we say that the being-making (οὐσιοποιοὺς) logoi of all beings, which

Concluding Thoughts

We will conclude with a few brief observations. First, the influence of St Maximus is ubiquitous in Fr. Stăniloae's work. It is prominent in his discussions of the Trinity, of Christ, the Church and the world, asceticism and deification, and most especially, in his integral view of person and nature in both the Holy Trinity and humanity. Indeed, in contemporary Orthodox theology, Stăniloae's dedication to the Saint, as evident from his extraordinary accomplishment of translating the entire *corpus*, and the subsequent influence of the Saint on his own thought is, perhaps, unique. But not only in content, but also in methodology, we could say that Fr. Stăniloae is truly a disciple of St Maximus: in his primary goal to serve the Church, in his refusal to separate dogma from life, and in his willingness to cite theologians and thinkers from every era, accepting the good while leaving aside the unacceptable. As a result, he produced a rich theological synthesis which is both traditional and contemporary simultaneously.[83]

Secondly, one must appreciate the place of St Maximus in Stăniloae's theological synthesis, which sought to integrate Orthodox thought and life: St Gregory Palamas revealed to him a God that comes to man, embracing and enlightening him with His uncreated energies; the *Philokalia* presented a step-by-step guide to purification and deification; and St Maximus synthesized these aspects, revealing that the desire to receive the gift of deification was rooted in human nature,[84] embedded in the very structure of the world, and in all cases, fulfilled in Christ. These themes are wonderfully synthesized in the conclusion to Fr. Stăniloae's

pre-exist uniformly in God, are paradigms (παραδείγματα), which theology calls predeterminations, and divine beneficent volitions (θελήματα), determinative and creative (ἀφοριστικὰ καὶ ποιητικὰ) of beings, according to which the Super-Essential both pre-determined and produced all beings."

[83] Stăniloae repeatedly summarized his theological project as an effort to uncover the significance of the light and unchanging truths of the dogmas for the concerns and struggles of the practical Christian life (for example, in the prefaces to both his first book of systematic theology, *Jesus Christ or the Restoration of Man*, and in one his last, the *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*). In the former, he states that "The dogmas are concise formulae with a narrow scope, and exactly due to this limited scope, and to the restricted character of their content, is the possibility of their remaining an unchanging axis in the continual flux of life...." Theology thereby becomes "both alive and new, but also faithful to the unchanging doctrine of the Church" (Preface, *Restaurarea*).

[84] SO 218 n.46.

great work on Orthodox asceticism and mysticism: "The incarnation of the Word... gave man the possibility to see in the human face of Logos, concentrated anew, all the *logoi* and divine energies. This final deification will consist of a contemplation and experience of all the divine logoi and energies conceived in and radiating from, the face of Christ."[85]

[85] SO 319, ET 374.

Georges Florovsky's Reading of Maximus: Anti-Bulgakov or Pro-Bulgakov?

Paul L. Gavrilyuk

At this remarkable conference, Maximus is celebrated by engaging several dimensions of the canonical heritage of the Church. We have an opportunity to honor his theology in the sanctuary of our minds, to praise him in new hymns brought from Mount Athos, to contemplate his image on the new icons, even to venerate his relics and participate in the consecration of a local church in his name! There is also something you should not leave your home without, namely a CD with Maximus' *Chapters on Love*, produced with Bishop Maximus' participation. If I may slightly paraphrase St Basil of Caesarea, "the honor paid to Maximus passes on to the Logos." May our *logoi* concerning Maximus, to the extent to which they are true, reflect the wisdom of the divine Logos.

The subject of this paper is Georges Florovsky's treatment of Maximus the Confessor. This treatment contains some vital clues for understanding Florovsky's main theological project, namely, his neopatristic synthesis. More precisely, what Florovsky calls Maximus' "creative and transformative synthesis" provides a major paradigm for doing neopatristic theology. One may also discern in Florovsky's reading of Maximus a subtle, indirect dialogue with Bulgakov. By engaging Maximus' theory of the divine *logoi*, Florovsky follows the metaphysical trajectory of Bulgakov's sophiology as far as he can. If in the final analysis Florovsky parts ways with Bulgakov, it is a friendly parting of the ways, which owes much to Bulgakov's sophiology. I argue this point in more general terms in my forthcoming book, *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance*. I call for a revision of the narrative, which

casts the theological modernism of Bulgakov's generation exclusively in terms of the opposition to the neopatristic direction of Florovsky's generation.

Florovsky discusses Maximus in the penultimate chapter of the second volume of his patrology lectures, entitled *The Byzantine Fathers of the Fifth-Eighth Centuries*. The lectures were delivered at the St Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris from 1928 to 1931. They were subsequently typed up by Elizaveta Skobtsova (future "mother Maria") and published by the YMCA Press in 1933.

Florovsky came to teach at the St Sergius Institute in 1926, at Bulgakov's invitation. Florovsky's academic work prior to the mid-1920s was primarily concerned with Russian intellectual history. Upon his arrival to Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1920, Florovsky wrote his thesis on Alexander Herzen (whom the Soviet historians converted into one of the ideologues of the Communist regime in Russia). Since Florovsky's formal academic training had nothing to do with patristics, Florovsky felt unprepared to accept Bulgakov's offer to teach the subject at the St Sergius. In response, Bulgakov assured his young colleague that with his command of the languages and love of the Church Fathers, Florovsky could master the subject in no time. After all, Bulgakov added, I am presently teaching the Old Testament, for which I have no academic qualifications, but behold, I am doing it and enjoying it immensely! Thus encouraged by his older colleague, Florovsky accepted Bulgakov's offer. As Florovsky would come to recognize years later, by teaching patristics he discovered his true vocation.

In his lectures, Florovsky combined two common approaches to patrology. One approach was an author-by-author review of the ancient Christian literature. The second approach, developed during the nineteenth century, was *Dogmengeschichte*, or the history of ideas. Florovsky defined *Dogmengeschichte* as uncovering the "internal dialectics" of the Christian "mind" and as identifying the main "types and trends of Christian thought."[1] But Florovsky's lectures were also meant to become more than a useful survey of this kind. In addition to the purely expository function, the lectures provided a historical platform for Florovsky's own theological program.

[1] Florovsky, "Author's Preface (1978)" in *CW* IX: xvii.

In the introduction to the first volume, *The Eastern Fathers of the Fourth Century*, Florovsky declared: "I believe and know that only it [patristic theology] opens the right and true way towards a new Christian synthesis, craved and sought after in our time."[2] The general thrust of his emerging program of the "return to the Fathers" was in evidence in this declaration.

It is instructive to compare this declaration to the preface of *The Ways of Russian Theology*, where Florovsky wrote:

> The study of the Russian past has convinced me that an Orthodox theologian today can find the true norm and the living spring of creative inspiration only in the heritage of the Holy Fathers. I am convinced that the intellectual separation from patristics and Byzantinism was the main cause of all interruptions and spiritual failures in Russian development. A history of these failures is narrated in this book.[3]

The Ways of Russian Theology told a story of how the western influences on Russian theology led to failures and dead ends. The patrology lectures began to offer a way out of the impasse, namely, a return to the "ways of Byzantine theology," which incidentally was the expression Florovsky used as a title of the introduction to his second patrology volume.[4]

Despite the promising introductory announcement that "patristic theology opens the right and true way towards a new Christian synthesis," the lectures themselves offered only scattered hints as to *how* such a new synthesis could be achieved. In fact, in the patrology lectures and elsewhere, Florovsky rarely, if at all, speaks of the operation of a synthesis with sufficient methodological precision.

[2] *Vostochnye ottsy IV veka* (Paris: YMCA, 1931), 5. Florovsky mentioned "the need for a new synthesis" as early as 1928 in his review article "Protivorechiia origenizma" ["The Contradictions of Origenism"], *Put'* 18 (1929), 107.

[3] Florovsky, *Puti russkogo bogosloviia* (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1937/ 1983), XV. Cf. Chizhevsky, *Narysy z istorii filosofii na Ukraini*, 9: "The history of philosophy is a history of errors of human spirit."

[4] The Russian title is "Puti vizantiiskago bogosloviia", in *Vostochnye Ottsy V-VIII vekov* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1933), 5-42. In the revised and significantly expanded English edition, this chapter, translated from the unchanged Russian original, was awkwardly renamed "The Source of Byzantine Theology", *CW* VIII: 15-17.

In the patrology lectures, Florovsky located the synthesizing activity in the past by attributing the achievement of a synthesis either to an individual Church Father or to a specific period in Church history. Several examples of Florovsky's use of the term "synthesis" will suffice to illustrate this point. According to Florovsky, the theology of Basil of Caesarea was a "theological-metaphysical synthesis," formulating the Church's faith more precisely by means of the Greek philosophical terminology.[5] In contrast, Ephraim the Syrian offered an "artistic synthesis" of pastoral rather than doctrinal significance.[6] To use another example, Emperor Justinian had achieved what Florovsky called a "short-lived theocratic synthesis," which involved a tension between the "holy Empire" and the monastic Desert.[7]

Florovsky also spoke of a synthesis as reached during a specific historical period. Painting on a larger historical canvas, he presented patristic theology as a synthesis of the apostolic kerygma with Greek philosophy which resulted in what he called "Christian Hellenism" or "Christian philosophy." In this scheme, the Council of Chalcedon (451) was a landmark event in the battle between the Alexandrian and the Antiochean theological traditions, ushering in an "integral synthesis" (*tselostnyi sintez*) to be fully achieved in the Byzantine period.[8]

According to Florovsky, the pinnacle of this development was the theology of Maximus the Confessor. It was Maximus, not John of Damascus, who in Florovsky's judgment, provided the "new theological synthesis," rooted in ascetic experience.[9] Florovsky clearly intended a parallel between Maximus' "new theological synthesis" and the Russian scholar's own "new Christian synthesis." While Florovsky never made

[5] *Vostochnye ottsy IV veka*, 60, 75. But on p. 77, Florovsky, apparently contradicting what he said earlier, contrasts a "theological synthesis" with a "metaphysical synthesis", observing that Basil intended the former, not the latter. On the absorption of Platonic elements into a "Christian synthesis" see "Redemption", *CW* III: 115.

[6] *Vostochnye ottsy IV veka*, 233.

[7] Florovsky, *Vostochnye ottsy V-VIII vekov*, 42; "The Antinomies of Christian History: Empire and Desert", *CW* II: 67-100; "Christianity and Civilization", *SVSQ* 1 (1952), 17.

[8] *Vostochnye ottsy V-VIII vekov*, 7; *The Byzantine Fathers of the Fifth Century*, *CW* VIII: 191. In "The Fathers of the Church and the Old Testament", *CW* IV: 35, Florovsky explains: "The Antiochene school stood for 'history,' Alexandrians rather for 'contemplation.' And surely both elements had to be brought together in a balanced synthesis."

[9] *Vostochnye ottsy V-VIII vekov*, 42.

this claim explicitly, Maximus' theology furnished the most satisfying paradigm for developing the neopatristic synthesis.

Florovsky's treatment of Maximus, while extensive, also had to be selective. The themes that Florovsky considered in some detail—the doctrine of revelation and Christology—were central both to Maximus' vision and to Florovsky's developing neopatristic theology. It is difficult to judge how well Florovsky knew Maximus' works in the original. Florovsky's patrology contained no footnotes, but only a single summary bibliographic endnote to each chapter. It is likely that he consulted the 90th and the 91st volumes of Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, mentioned in the endnote.

Another important source was a book *St Maximus the Confessor and Byzantine Theology* published in 1915 by the professor of Kiev Theological Academy, Sergei Epifanovich (1886-1918). In the beginning of the twentieth century, Epifanovich's important monograph was one of the first explorations in the emerging field of Maximus studies. (It is my understanding that the publication of Epifanovich's previously unpublished studies, totaling some 1500 pages, is currently in preparation in Kiev). Epifanovich presented Maximus as "possessing an extraordinary power of creative synthesis."[10] According to the Ukrainian scholar, Maximus was no mere compiler of authoritative patristic opinions. Rather, he was able to integrate the different currents of patristic thought into a unified theological vision. This vision, continues Epifanovich, was profoundly shaped by Maximus' ascetic and mystical experience. In other words, "Maximus' dogmatic theology is integrated into his ascetic theology."[11] Maximus does not provide a merely external rational justification of the teachings of the Church, but achieves a transformation of the Church's teachings in light of ascetic experience.

On all of these points—the characterization of Maximus' theology as a "creative synthesis," the emphasis on the transforming role of ascetic experience—Florovsky closely followed Epifanovich's presentation of Maximus without acknowledging the fact directly. Florovsky was equally convinced that while Maximus did not produce a comprehensive theological system, his theological vision nevertheless possessed a considerable internal unity.[12] Florovsky aptly describes Maximus' theology

[10] Epifanovich, 49.

[11] Epifanovich, 52; cf. Florovsky, 197-8.

[12] Florovsky, 200; cf. Epifanovich, 52.

as a "symphony of spiritual experience."[13] The unifying theme of this symphony was Christology. Florovsky was especially keen to emphasize the centrality of Christology not only in Maximus' soteriology, but also in his account of revelation, creation, human nature, ecclesiology, and so on. Florovsky, whose own theological vision was firmly Christocentric, especially appreciated the extent to which the doctrine of God-man informed all aspects of Maximus' thought. For example, following Maximus, Florovsky was prepared to allow that the Logos would have become incarnate even if the Fall had not happened, the primary purpose of the Incarnation being deification and union with God.[14]

More generally, Epifanovich construed the development of Byzantine theology as pagan Neoplatonism gradually ceding ground to and finally being superseded by "Christian philosophy." For example, pagan pantheism, which represented the world as an eternal and necessary outflowing of the divine being, gave way to the Christian idea that the world was a contingent creation of the free divine will.[15] This idea played a prominent role in Florovsky's historiography. For him, the "intuition of creaturehood" was one of the defining aspects of "Christian philosophy" or "Christian Hellenism." Florovsky opposed this intuition to the pantheism of non-Christian Neoplatonism, which he linked to Origenism, German Idealism, and Russian Sophiology.

With regard to Maximus, Florovsky stressed that the Byzantine theologian rejected the speculation that the world was coeternal with God.[16] Florovsky most probably had in mind the passage from the *Chapters on Love* 4. 6, where Maximus wrote:

> Some say that created things eternally exist with God, which is impossible. For how can what is limited in every way eternally coexist with the wholly infinite? Or how are they really creatures if they are coeternal with the Creator? But this is the theory of the Greeks, who admit God as the Creator not of the substance at all but only of the properties. But we who know the almighty God affirm that he is the Creator not of the properties but of the substance endowed with properties. And if this is true, creatures do not eternally coexist with God.[17]

[13] Florovsky, 198.

[14] Florovsky, "*Cur Deus Homo?* The Motive of the Incarnation," *CW* III: 163-170.

[15] Epifanovich, 17, 160.

[16] Florovsky, 205-6.

[17] Maximus, *Chapters on Love*, 4. 6; trans. George C. Berthold, *Maximus Confessor: Selected Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 76.

This point was, of course, shared by an overwhelming majority of Orthodox patristic theologians. Maximus' distinct contribution was his development of the doctrine of the divine *logoi*.[18]

Drawing on Epifanovich, Florovsky acknowledges the complexity and multiplicity of meanings and functions that Maximus ascribed to the divine *logoi*. As Florovsky explains

> First, the *logoi* are the divine thoughts and volitions, prejudgments and predeterminations of the divine will, "the eternal thoughts of the eternal Mind," in which thoughts God conceives and cognizes the world. As creative "rays" the *logoi* come from the divine center and are drawn back into it. Second, the divine *logoi* are the dynamic paradigms of things. The logos of the thing is not only its "truth" and "meaning," not only its "law" and "definition" (*horos*), but first of all its originating principle.[19]

God reveals himself in creation through the *logoi*. The deified human mind perceives the divine *logoi* in and through creation. The logoi, therefore, provide the links that enable the world to participate in God. The logoi are the principles mediating between God and the world.

A serious aporia presents itself at this point. What precisely is the ontological status of the divine *logoi*? Are the *logoi* created or uncreated? Florovsky interprets Maximus as teaching that the *logoi* are divine volitions or eternal divine volitional thoughts about creation. As such, the divine *logoi* are ontologically prior to the creation of the world. Maximus states in *Ambigua* 7 that the eternity of the *logoi* does *not* entail the eternity of the world. God eternally plans and wills to create the world in time.[20] In the act of creation, God's eternal will produces time-bound creation, that is, something other than God.

While the world is not coeternal with God, as was made explicit in the *Chapters on Love* 4. 6, the divine volitional thoughts about the world are eternal. God eternally plans and wills to become incarnate and to save the world. But Maximus explicitly denies that Christ's human nature preexists the Incarnation. While the line between the eternal divine volitional thoughts and the time-bound actualization of these thoughts

[18] For a masterful recent treatment of Maximus' theory of the divine *logoi*, see Torstein Tollefsen, *The Christocentric Cosmology of Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[19] Florovsky, 206.

[20] Florovsky, 206.

is admittedly very fine, Florovsky is determined, with the help of Maximus to draw and keep this line. While Palamas' teaching regarding the divine energies in many aspects corresponds to Maximus' teaching regarding the divine *logoi*, the comparison of the two teachings is beyond the scope of the present paper.

The more pressing question is the connection of everything that has been said about the Maximian theory of the divine *logoi* to Bulgakov's sophiology. For Bulgakov, Sophia, or the divine humanity, has a mixed ontological status. Similar to the Godman, the Sophia is both uncreated and created. The Sophia is the eternal ground of the temporal world. Even more controversially, Bulgakov aligns the ideal world closely with the expression of the divine essence. In Bulgakov, the ideal sophianic world expresses the content of the divine life and in this sense the ideal world is necessary for God. Bulgakov clearly accepted the teaching of Maximus and other Church Fathers that the divine plan about the world was eternal. But Bulgakov went a step further and reified, so to speak, the eternal divine volitional thoughts about the world into the eternal ground of the world, which was at once created and uncreated, at once coeternal with God and temporal. It is not obvious, however, that Bulgakov here contradicted Maximius' view that the divine *logoi* were divine thoughts about the world.

Vladimir Lossky and less directly, Florovsky, proceeded to draw out the problematic implications that Bulgakov's sophiology entailed pantheism, pagan emanationism, determinism, essentialism, and a catalogue of other heresies. These charges were and remain powerful rhetorically. Many contemporary Orthodox readers simply avoid a serious reading of Bulgakov because of those charges. Nevertheless, I want to emphasize that Bulgakov's panentheism attempted to do justice to the best insights of the *creatio ex nihilo* doctrine, although ultimately Bulgakov modified this doctrine considerably. According to Bulgakov, God creates the temporal world out of the sophianic world already existing "in" God. For Maximus, God creates by means of his volitional thoughts, that is, by means of uncreated entities containing information, so to speak, about created beings.

I personally do *not* see Florovsky and Maximus as fighting on the side of the angels, and Bulgakov as languishing in the limbo reserved for Origenists, pantheists, German philosophers, and other question-

able characters. What is at stake here is a general antinomy that the human mind comes to when pondering the boundary between the uncreated (God and everything "around" God) and the created world. For if the concept of such a boundary has any meaning at all, the boundary itself has to be *both* created and uncreated—the fundamental insight that Bulgakov was trying to convey by insisting on this dual nature of the Sophia. Our language and logic breakdown when we attempt to articulate a transition from the uncreated to created.

Bulgakov's panentheism and Florovsky's ontology of creation out of nothing tended to prioritize one side of theological antinomies at the expense of the other side. This is to be expected since the antinomic language is inherently unstable, and it is nearly impossible to maintain a consistent balance between both sides of the antinomies. Bulgakov prioritized the union of Creator and creation at the expense of their ontological difference; the connection between the eternal nature of God and the divine self-manifestation at the expense of the uniqueness of the historical divine revelation; divine providence at the expense of human freedom; the fullness of divine life at the expense of human creativity, and so on. Florovsky, with his "intuition of creaturehood," on the contrary, prioritized the ontological difference between God and the world at the expense of the divine-human communion; the uniqueness of the historical divine revelation in Christ at the expense of the eternal divine counsel regarding human salvation; the indeterminate character of human freedom at the expense of divine providence; the genuine novelty of contingent historical events at the expense of the divine omniscience.

Therefore, we may conclude that Florovsky's interpretation of Maximus tended to take a direction against Bulgakov's sophiology. However, the problem at stake in the sophiological controversy ran deeper than the facile distinction between Florovsky who remained faithful to the Church Fathers, and Bulgakov, who failed in this task. The problem, I suggest, was in pondering the boundary between the uncreated and created, in pondering the deep mystery of just *how* a God who transcended all created things brought forth a being at once utterly dependent and utterly different from himself, the created world.

VIII

Addendum to the Symposium

A Note on the Definition of *χρόνος* and *αἰών* in St Maximus the Confessor through Aristotle

Sotiris Mitralexis

In this short note we will try (i) to outline the Aristotelian conditions of the Maximian definition of time (χρόνος) and eternity (αἰών)[1], (ii) to underline the implications of Maximus the Confessor's definition, and (iii) to formulate propositions about the relationship of time and eternity with Maximus' "ever-moving repose" (*στάσις ἀεικίνητος*) and "stationary movement" (*στάσιμος ταυτοκινησία*) in relation to the human person.

1. The Aristotelian conditions of Maximus' definition

A fundamental tool that Maximus uses for his lucid definitions is the philosophy of Aristotle: Maximus "uses Aristotle's technical terms and many of his ideas with the immediacy and certainty with which a native

[1] A shorter or longer study of the Maximian perspective concerning χρόνος and αἰών is to be found in nearly every major study of Maximus the Confessor's works (von Balthasar, Thunberg etc.), but more specifically in the monograph by Pascal Mueller-Jourdan, *Typologie spatio-temporelle de l'Ecclesia byzantine. La Mystagogie de Maxime le Confesseur dans la culture philosophique de l'Antiquité tardive*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 74, Leiden: Brill, 2005, in Paul Plass' article "Transcedent Time in Maximus the Confessor" (*Thomist*; a Speculative Quarterly Review, 44:2 (1980:April) p.259), in Edward Epsen's article "Eternity is a Present, Time is its Unwrapping" (*Heythrop Journal*, LI (2010), pp. 417–429), and in the paper presented by Andrew Louth: "Time and Space in Maximos the Confessor"at the conference *Neoplatonism and St. Maximus the Confessor* (Athens 2008, under publication), among others. Apart from these, exceptionally fruitful references to the subject are to be found in Christos Yannaras' and John Zizioulas' works. The brevity of this paper requires that we express some thoughts parallel to these studies, without comprehensively presentating them.

would use his mother language. [...] His philosophical "arsenal" (technical terms, counterpoints between concepts, structures of thought etc.) are largely those formed by Aristotle."[2]

In the case of the definition of χρόνος and αἰών, Maximus sees Aristotle's perspective as an obvious starting point for him to articulate his philosophical perspective. Maximus, just like Aristotle, relies on the concept of motion (κίνησις), which he uses extensively.[3] Aristotle defines time through the notion of motion as follows: "time is a number of motion in respect of the before and after."[4] For him, time is not motion in itself, but a number, a measurement of motion in respect of the before and after, of the transition from past to future.[5] In the same way that Aristotle excludes the identification of time with movement itself, he also excludes the possibility of the existence of time or of any sort of time *without* motion, movement, change: he finds that this is *obvious* (φανερόν), self-evident[6].

Wondering about the existence of time, Aristotle concludes that time does either not exist at all, or that it exists "barely" (μόλις καὶ ἀμυδρῶς)—as its parts (past and future, "before" and "after") either no longer exist or do not exist yet, while the adimensional present, the "now" (νῦν), cannot be considered a part of time, as a hypothetical sum of many adimensional "nows" does not constitute time.[7] We could say that *for Aristotle, time is the measurement of an existing reality, i.e., motion, and therefore as real as the reality that it measures—albeit not having an existence of its own.*[8] It *counts*, it *measures* something real, something existing, but it is *not* real in itself, in the full sense of the word.

[2] Betsakos, Basil: *Στάσις Ἀεικίνητος: Ἡ Ἀναχαίνιση τῆς Ἀριστοτελικῆς Κινήσεως στὴ Θεολογία Μαξίμου τοῦ Ὁμολογητοῦ*. Athens: Harmos 2006, p. 11.

[3] Basil Betsakos' monograph "*Στάσις Ἀεικίνητος...*" is a dedicated study of the rendering—or, more accurately, the renewal—of Aristotle's theory of motion in Maximus the Confessor's works.

[4] Aristotle, *Φυσικά*, 219b 1-2: "For this is just what time is, the calculable measure or dimension of motion with respect to before-and-afterness." Aristotle analyses his understanding of time mainly in *Φυσικά*, 217b-224a. More on the Aristotelian definition of time itself in P. Conen: *Die Zeittheorie des Aristoteles*, München: Beck (Zetemata, 35) 1964, pp. 30-61, and in Coope, Ursula: *Time for Aristotle. Physics IV. 10-14*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2005.

[5] D. Bostock: *Space, time, matter and form, Essays on Aristotle's Physics*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press 2006, p. 137: "Time is defined as a quantity of motion either (i) in respect of the before and after in time (i.e., in respect of temporal instants), or (ii) in respect of the before and after in movement (i.e., in respect of the momentary status of moving bodies), or finally (iii) in respect of the before and after in place."

[6] *Physics*, 219a 1-2: Ὅτι μὲν οὖν οὔτε κίνησις οὔτ' ἄνευ κινήσεως ὁ χρόνος ἐστί, φανερόν. *Φυσικά*, 218b 33-219a 1: φανερὸν ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνευ κινήσεως καὶ μεταβολῆς χρόνος.

[7] *Physics*, 217b 32-34 and *Physics*, 218a 3-8.

For Aristotle, time and the subject that measures it, the consciousness that ascertains its passing, that experiences motion as a transition and numbers it, are clearly connected: "For it is when we are aware of the measuring of motion by a prior and posterior limit that we may say time has passed."[9] He also ascertains that time is linked with deterioration and decay, that time measures the corruption of life: "Everything grows old under the power of time and is forgotten through the lapse of time"—"Time is the cause of deterioration."[10]

The following judgement by Aristotle is crucial for its comparison with Maximus' understanding of time, as Maximus differs greatly: Aristotle makes clear that if we perceive and experience νῦν simply as present and as one, without any conception of motion or transition in respect to the before and after, then we cannot speak of either time or movement.[11] Aristotle excludes the possibility of experiencing time as an adimensional present, he thinks of it as merely a mistake that shows that there is no motion or time.

Even if man, the subject, is the one who measures and numbers motion as time, man is wholly subject to the sequence of the "before" and "after" and to the corresponding motion: if the perception of said sequence, transition, and motion ceases, this can only indicate the absence of motion—and, as a result, the absence of time. The very perception of νῦν on behalf of the subject turns νῦν into past, as it follows νῦν in time, making it essentially inexperienceable. By trying to reach out and grasp the νῦν, we are already in the future—"after"—while νῦν has hidden in the past—"before." We will

[8] See also: Sarnowsky, Jürgen: *Die aristotelisch-scholastische Theorie der Bewegung. Studien zum Kommentar Alberts von Sachsen zur Physik des Aristoteles*. Münster: Aschendorff 1989, p. 235: "Die Existenz der Zeit folgt aber auf jeden Fall aus der auch subjektiv erfahrbaren Existens des *presens*, und ihre Realität folgt –obwohl sie als *numerus* nur in der Seele existieren kann– aus der Realität der Bewegung."

[9] *Physics*, 219a 23-25.

[10] *Physics*, 221a 30-221b 3.

[11] *Physics*, 219a 30-33: "Accordingly, when we perceive a 'now' in isolation, that is to say not as one of two, an initial and a final one in the motion, nor yet as being a final 'now' of one period and at the same time the initial 'now' of a succeeding period, then no time seems to have elapsed, for neither has there been any corresponding motion. But when we perceive a distinct before and after, then we speak of time."

now examine how Maximus the Confessor's perspective on the subject of time differs from that of Aristotle.

2. The definition of χρόνος and αἰών by Maximus the Confessor

Maximus the Confessor's definitive formulation for both χρόνος and αἰών is one and the same: "Aeon is time, when its motion ceases, and time is the aeon, when it is measured in its motion. So the aeon, to formulate a definition, is time deprived of motion, and time is the aeon when it is measured while in motion."[12]

The first thought that strikes the reader of this definitive formulation is the interdependence and interconnectedness of χρόνος and αἰών: neither of these two terms can be defined without taking into account the other one, and we could say that *by defining the one, Maximus is voiding the other*. They describe philosophical terms and realities in a way that they cannot be conceived individually, but only in relation of the one to the other. Χρόνος presupposes αἰών and vice versa, thereby voiding them. And either in the context of a contradistinction between "νοητὰ" and "αἰσθητὰ" or between "κτιστὸν" (created) and "ἄκτιστον" (Uncreated), this conjoined distinction between χρόνος and αἰών implies the interdependence of the broader realities in which they are integrated.

Continuing Aristotle, Maximus relates time (and aeon) with motion: however, in contrast with the Stagirite, time in Maximus is not merely the measuring of a given motion ("a number of motion, a measuring of movement") but "the aeon, when it is measured in its motion" (while aeon has no motion, as it is "time without motion"). *Aeon*, a reality that is otherwise foreign to the sequence of the "before" and "after," constitutes *time* when it is integrated in these constrains, when it is "dislocated by motion" in the world that we know. Time is "the aeon, when it is measured in its motion"—it is the aeon when it unfolds in the sequence of motion. The aeon is Maximus' understanding of eternity, but an understanding of it as infinite linear time is completely excluded by him.

Maximus reiterates Aristotle's ascertainments that time is the numbering/"circumscribing" of motion, as well as that time measures

[12] *Amb.*, PG 91, 1164B-C: Αἰὼν γάρ ἐστιν ὁ χρόνος, ὅταν στῇ τῆς κινήσεως, καὶ χρόνος ἐστὶν ὁ αἰών, ὅταν μετρῆται κινήσει φερόμενος, ὡς εἶναι τὸν μὲν αἰῶνα, ἵνα ὡς ἐν ὅρῳ περιλαβὼν εἴπω, χρόνον ἐστερημένον κινήσεως, τὸν δὲ χρόνον αἰῶνα κινήσει μετρούμενον.

deterioration, alteration, and corruption: "Time is circumscribed motion, and as a consequence the motion through one's life is altering and corrupting everything in it."[13]

Conversely, the aeon is not defined and described separately, as an aspect of time or timelessness of a world that differs from the one we know: it is time itself when "time's motion ceases," when the sequence of the "before" and "after" and the transition from the past to the future ceases. The aeon is "time deprived of motion."

Unlike Aristotle, Maximus does not seem to question the very existence of time and Aeon or to deny it, to rule that it is invalid: he confirms the existence of both realities, reminding through the interconnectedness and interdependence of their definitions that they exist, to quote the Council of Chalcedon's formulations on Christological matters, *inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, and inseparably* from each other.

We *cannot* conclude that Maximus' aeon is *the "time" of the Uncreated* or something similar: the aeon "has a beginning," Maximus says, it is "not ἄναρχος, not without a beginning" as well as everything "included in it"—however, it cannot be "circumscribed by a number."[14] Despite the lack of identification of the aeon with the Uncreated, or of the aeon *in* the Uncreated, the very distinction between time and aeon as Maximus formulates it stems and is implied from the contradistinction between the created and the Uncreated, a contradistinction that is not to be found in Aristotle's ontology and in the Greek philosophers in general,[15] which explains why the Aristotelian definition of time could not have been merely repeated by Maximus in the context of his ecclesial ontology without change, but only with the inclusion of aeon, a "time deprived of motion."

[13] *Cap. div.* V, 47, PG 90, 1368C: Ο δὲ χρόνος, περιγραφομένη καθέστηκε κίνησις, ὅθεν καὶ ἀλλοιωτικὴ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ καθέστηκεν ἡ κατὰ τὴν ζωὴν κίνησις.

[14] *Cap. theol.* PG 90, 1085A: Ο μὲν γὰρ χρόνος, μετρουμένην ἔχων τὴν κίνησιν, ἀριθμῷ περιγράφεται· ὁ αἰὼν δὲ συνεπινοουμένην ἔχων τῇ ὑπάρξει τὴν πότε κατηγορίαν, πάσχει διάστασιν, ὡς ἀρχὴν τοῦ εἶναι λαβών. Εἰ δὲ χρόνος καὶ αἰὼν οὐκ ἄναρχα, πολλῷ μᾶλλον τὰ ἐν τούτοις περιεχόμενα.

[15] The Aristotelian "Prime Unmoved Mover" (πρῶτον κινοῦν ἀκίνητον) could be understood as "uncreated" if we link the notions of "moved" (κινητὸν) and "born/existing" (γενητὸν) with the notion of "createdness," and as a result understand the "unmoved" Mover as "uncreated," however this would not be accurate. The Aristotelian "Prime Unmoved Mover" does not necessarily reside outside of the world and should not be confused with the Christian notion of uncreatedness, which presupposes a *creatio ex nihilo*.

3. The relation between χρόνος, αἰών, and στάσις ἀεικίνητος in Maximus

The formulation of seemingly contradictory definitions in the aforementioned excerpt PG 91, 1164B-C and essentially the absence of independent definitions, since the premises of each definition refer to the other and depend on it, thereby creating a relational cycle of semi-definitions, echoes and reflects Maximus' apophatic stance. However, "apophaticism is not a nebulous vagueness of meaning, but our coming together in a common understanding of the signifiers with the knowledge of their cognitive distance from the experience of the signified"[16]: it is not the detached, independent linguistic recapitulation and understanding of the aeon that is attempted through the definition of the aeon, which is foreign to the direct experience of the non-deified persons, but a call to the human person to enter the aeon, to liberate one's person from the constrains of time as a sequence of motion, of the "before" and "after", of corruption, deterioration, necessity, death, inexistence. A starting point for this liberation is the assurance that the aeon is not something wholly foreign, distant and strange, but simply "time deprived of motion"—the world and time as we know it, but liberated from predeterminations, necessities, corruption, distance, and the Fall.

A pair of similar seemingly contradictory formulations is the στάσις ἀεικίνητος ("ever-moving repose") and the στάσιμος ταυτοκινησία ("stationary movement"), which are also not merely rhetorical devices void of meaning and substance, but signify a reality crucial for Maximus, i.e., the possibility of participating in a fullness that is never fulfilled, in the ἀτέλεστος τελειότης[17] that is deification: θέωσις. Maximus writes that the nature/essence, when it resides in God acquires "an ever-moving repose and a stationary movement" [18] eternally moving around God and God only. What are the implications of the στάσις ἀεικίνητος for the distinction between time and aeon?

We have already noted that the aeon is time itself when it is "deprived of motion," when the motion ceases, when the sequence of the

[16] Yannaras, Christos: *Ἐξι φιλοσοφικὲς ζωγραφιές*. Athens: Ikaros 2011, pp. 126.

[17] John of Climacus, *The Ladder*, PG 88, 1148C.

[18] *Cap. div.*, PG 90, 1369A: ἐν τῷ θεῷ γινομένη, στάσιν ἀεικίνητον ἔξει καὶ στάσιμον ταυτοκινησίαν, περὶ τὸ ταὐτὸν καὶ ἓν καὶ μόνον ἀϊδίως γινομένην.

"before" and "after" and the transition from past to future ceases and is no more, making the present, the "now" of that transition, adimensional and not participating in any numbering of motion, albeit experienceable as aeon. Maximus testifies the entrance of the human person into the "temporality" of a dimensionless "now," the dimensionless present that constitutes the aeon, as attainable by the human person when he accepts the reality of deification. The fulfilling nearness of the relationship between the uncreated divine person and the created human person *nullifies space*, as the distance that constitutes space is being abolished, i.e., the distance that makes things and persons known as *objects* (ἀντι-κείμενο) standing opposite of the subject, thereby *creating space* or *making space known*. In the same way, this relationship nullifies *time* and *temporality* by transforming them into *aeon, time without motion, time deprived of motion*, as any and every motion or transition between the "before" and "after" is nullified in the directness of the relationship ("it will be joined with the Providence in all directness"[19]).

However, *the absence of motion, transition, or change* in the fullness of the nearness of deification cannot be characterized as stillness: deification is not a blissful repose, and the encounter of a God that is ἐραστὴς μανικώτατος with his beloved human person is not to be signified as an eternal pause and stillness, but more as a restlessness (ἀεικινησία), a present in a perpetual becoming (γίγνεσθαι). Exiting temporality does not need to imply entering stillness and stagnation in the same way that it does not need to imply the nullification of one's existence, but its fullness. The limitations of language are exhausted in the effort to signify such possibilities, but Maximus attempts it with στάσις ἀεικίνητος and στάσιμος ταυτοκινησία: the *repose* that is implied by the nullification of time and space (that is, of the distance that is contrary to the fullness of nearness) is *ever-moving*, thereby signifying a reality beyond motion and repose, movement and stillness as we know them empirically.[20] In the case of time, this describes the possibility that time doesn not have to measure our procession towards corruption and deterioration, but that temporality can be liberated by entering the aeon: "a time deprived of motion, a time without motion." To

[19] *Cap. div.*, PG 90, 1368C-D: ἀμέσως συναφθῇ τῇ προνοίᾳ.

[20] See also: Yannaras, "Στάση ἀεικίνητη ἐν φάτνῃ", a column in the newspaper "Kathimerini" (21/12/2003).

be more precise, motion and time are not nullified, but *tranformed, transmuted into a stationary movement.*

The brevity of this paper does not allow for further examination of the dialectics between χρόνος, αἰών, and στάσις ἀεικίνητος in Maximus the Confessor's works and can only offer some hints, but a much more extensive doctoral dissertation on the subject is being prepared and will be announced.

Maximus and the Healing of the Sexual Division of Creation

Kostake Milkov

Introduction

"Nearly every sin is committed for pleasure,"[1] writes Maximus in the *Capita de caritate.* Pleasure, as he says in *Ambiguum* 10, "is nothing else than a kind of feeling formed in the sense organ by something perceived through senses, or a form of sensible energy constituted by an irrational desire."[2] Before the fall, man was simple[3] and stood above all drives that could distract him from a movement towards God that reached out "... with all the strength of love towards the One who was above him, i.e., God."[4] In his original state, man was free from all irrational passionate habits: "When God created human nature, he did not create sensible pleasure and pain along with it; rather, he furnished it with a certain spiritual capacity for pleasure..."[5] He was created without any sensible susceptibility to pleasure and, if it were not for sin, would have experienced forever what Maximus calls "noetic pleasure" and, by it, would have ineffably enjoyed God.[6] This free gift of grace was, however, instantly rejected: "But at the instant he was created, the first man, by use of his senses, squandered this spiritual capacity."[7]

However, sensible pleasure brought with it its dark side, its dark shadow that on its own is nothingness but reflects every movement of

[1] *Car.* 2.41 (PG 90: 998D; trans. Berthold 1985: 53).
[2] *Amb.* 10 (PG 91:1112CD; trans. Louth 1996: 100).
[3] "Simple" here is translation of ἄτεχνος and does not refer to 'simple' in the ontological, technical sense (=ἁπλός). I am grateful to Adam Cooper for pointing to the ambiguity of the word.
[4] *Amb.* 43 (PG 91: 1353C; trans. Meyendorff 1987: 138).
[5] *QThal.* 61 (CCSG 22: 85.8-11; trans. Blowers and Wilken 2003, 131).
[6] *Ibid.*, 85.10-12; 131.
[7] *Ibid.*, 85.13-15; 131.

pleasure as its exact opposite. Pain fatefully emulates every movement of pleasure, staging a drama with tragic proportions. It is the tragedy of the disintegration of human nature, and with it the whole creation. Sensual pleasure and pain lock man in a cycle of evil searching for pleasure only to realize that the moment of reaching it is the moment of coming face to face with pain. The more man tries to find wholeness in the pursuit of pleasure, the further he drifts away from that very goal. To bring him back God introduces a counterbalance to it:[8]

> God therefore affixed pain (ὀδύνη) alongside this sensible pleasure (ἡδονὴ) as a kind of punitive faculty, whereby the law of death was wisely implanted in our corporeal nature to curb the foolish mind in its desire to incline unnaturally towards sensible things.

Constant oscillations between pleasure and pain causes a tension, an existential crisis which is a reflection of man's anxiety over his mortality and corruptibility, sensing as he does that this was not his original destiny. Pleasure seems to be an attempt of man to prove his own significance, to outwit the apparent futility of his life, to achieve, even if for a moment, a self-actualization, to come to a feeling of wholeness and harmony with the rest of creation. Man's pursuit of pleasure is a cry through which he declares his presence and through which he communicates to the rest of the world the deepest longing for identity and belonging. Pleasure is a reflection of the search for how one may say, positively and unequivocally, "I am." This urge for an independent "I am" came to man when his natural will was mixed with an alloy of self-determining choice and passions that left him at the mercy of the desire for pleasure.

Healing the Sexual Division caused by Pleasure

According to Hans Urs von Balthasar, for Maximus sexuality is the focal point of the whole question of pleasure and pain.[9] Following Gregory of Nyssa,[10] Maximus asserts that the sexual way of procreation has been given to humanity only in anticipation of sin and, if it were not for sin, that there would have been another way of filling the earth with

[8] *QThal.* 61 (CCSG 22: 85.18-21; trans. Blowers and Wilken 2003, 132).

[9] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor* (trans. B. E. Daley), San Francisco, CA 2003, p. 196; cf. Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*. The Early Church Fathers. London and New York, NY1996, p. 213.

[10] *De hom. opif.* 17 and 22 (PG 44: 189AB; 205A; trans. Wilson 1975a: 407; 411-413).

people.[11] However, marriage and sexual intercourse are not sinful in themselves, as Maximus explains in the *Ambiguum* 42.[12]

> If marriage were reprehensible, so would be the natural law of reproduction, and if this natural process were reprehensible, then obviously we could rightly blame the Creator of nature, who invested it with this law of reproduction. How then would we refute the Manichees?

What Maximus is communicating here is that, although sexual procreation is not part of God's original plan, it is still part of God's design and, as such, it is good. The point is its proper use. He says this because no pleasurable feeling is to be sought solely for the sensation it produces. This applies to marital sex, too. Nothing must be done out of craving for a particular sensation, but within the context of God's purpose for each gift He has providentially granted humanity. This pattern of thinking is closely connected with Maximus' teaching on man as a microcosm and his role as a mediator who had to overcome the five-fold division in the universe. In *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 21, speaking of the fall of the first man, Adam, he espouses a distinction between two aspects of coming into being, γένεσις and γέννησις. The former is the original creation at which initially man was free from sin and corruptibility. He did not have any carnal pleasures or bodily needs. Procreation itself would have been achieved in a nonsexual way. After the fall, birth (γέννησις) has been connected with the sinful pleasure of indulgence. The original and natural plan of God for human generation is replaced by the law of birth through sexual conception:[13] Maximus associates these two aspects of coming into being respectively as "the λογος of creaturely origin (γένεσις) and the τρόπος of birth (γέννησις)."[14] This course of events, according to Maximus, was a rightful punishment for man's wilful decision to opt for the "morally inferior," which, as usual, he connects with the bestial manner of existence.[15] Thus coming into life is inevitably connected with decay, which at the end leads to death. Asked in *Quaestiones et dubia* 1.3 what does the psalmist's

[11] *Amb.* 41 (PG 91: 1309A; trans. Louth 1996: 159).

[12] *Amb.* 42 (PG 91: 1340B; trans. Balthasar 2003: 199).

[13] *QThal.* 21 (CCSG 7: 127.9-15; trans. Blowers and Wilken 2003: 109); cf. *QThal.* 61 (CCSG 22: 91.109-111; trans. Blowers and Wilken 2003: 135).

[14] *Amb.* 42. (PG 91: 1320A; trans. Blowers and Wilken 2003: 83).

[15] *Ibid.*, 1348A; 93-94.

exclamation, "in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5) mean, Maximus gives the following explanation:[16]

> Then all who are born from Adam are "conceived in iniquity" falling under the sentence of the forefather. And "and in sin did my mother conceive me" signifies that Eve, the first mother of us all, first bore sin (ἐκίσσησεν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν) by being eager for pleasure. Because of this, we, too, falling under the sentence of the mother, are said to be conceived (κισσᾶσθαι) in sin.

Therefore the first mediation that overcomes the divisions has to start with the most immediate consequence of the fall, that of the sexual division. It could be said that this desire for gratification led humanity's ancestors to "use the other" as a means towards a selfish end, which introduces a division between them. From that moment, procreation is a sign of man's initial desire for carnal pleasure to which God providentially attached pain and mortality as a way of preventing the irrevocability of fallenness. Man is thus bound to the circle of pursuit of pleasure as an attempt to achieve wholeness and the experience of pain that reminds him that all that has been "achieved" is a further alienation.[17]

Ambiguum 41 argues that Christ, through his virginal conception and birth, overcomes this division.[18] According to Thunberg's reading of Maximus, Christ performs this mediation "by subsuming the singularities of male and female under their common λόγος, and also that he did it by avoiding the misuse of his (passible) faculties."[19] Thunberg's comment on Christ's mediation between the genders captions the essence of Maximus' overall teaching on mediation: that the divisions between different realms are to be subsumed to their common λόγος. In the context of the genders, one might also remark upon how closely this resembles Gregory of Nyssa's understanding of male and female. For Gregory, the ideal was also humanity undivided into genders.[20] Sexuality is abolished in true humanity, but the *erotic* is, if anything, only intensified and is a sign of humanity's true fulfilment. The sexual way of procreation has to be obliterated since, while introducing life, it immediately introduces death as well. Therefore striving for continuity

[16] *QD* 1.3.7-10 (CCSG 10: 138-139; trans. Prassas 2003: 249).
[17] *QThal.* 61 (CCSG 22: 93; trans. Blowers and Wilken 2003: 136).
[18] *Amb.* 41 (PG 91: 1309A; trans. Louth 1996: 159).
[19] Thunberg 1995: 379.
[20] *De hom. opif.* 16.7 – 8 (PG 44: 181A-B; trans. Wilson 1975a: 405).

is proven futile, as its every attempt is inevitably brought to a halt. Every move towards permanence increases the intensity of transitoriness: "After the Fall human life was generated by means of pleasure-provoked conception through sperm and birth into the world of transience; and it ended in painful death."[21]

This view of sexuality in Maximus has drawn modern criticism. In von Balthasar's assessment, for example, Maximus' view of sexuality has no "final and fulfilling meaning."[22] Maximus, says Balthasar, takes the quotation from Galatians 3:28, "For in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female," as abolishing all sexual differences, thereby excluding the possibility that any of them could represent "likeness" to God. Balthasar may, however, be making too much of what he calls the "Eastern tradition" in Maximus' thought.[23] Adam Cooper rightly observes that reunion of the divisions does not reduce diversity to indistinguishable confusion. Thus the "distinct characteristics" will be retained even after the divided entities are united.[24] Although no longer divided, they are still distinct.

There is, though, one question that needs to be addressed when speaking of overcoming of the division between the sexes. The issue has been raised by Cameron E. Partridge's doctoral dissertation *Transfiguring Sexual Difference in Maximus the Confessor*.[25] Partridge's main argument is that the male/female division is the only division to which one cannot apply Maximus' union and distinction principle for all creation. Contrary to Maximian scholars, who claim that this principle applies to all five divisions,[26] Partridge asserts that the sexual division does not belong to the same order as the other four, since it is the only pair which

[21] *Div. cap.* 4.46 (PG 90: 1325B; trans. Palmer, Sherrard and Ware, 247).
[22] Von Balthasar 2003: 204.
[23] *Ibid.*
[24] Adam Cooper, *The Body in St. Maximus the Confessor: Holy Flesh, Wholly Deified*. Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford 2005, p. 211. Cf. *Amb.* 41 (PG 91: 1308C -1309D; Louth 1996: 158); cf. Lars Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos: The Vision of St. Maximus the Confessor*. Crestwood, NY 1985, p. 82.
[25] Cameron C. Partridge, *Transfiguring Sexual Difference in Maximus the Confessor*, Cambridge, MA (Harvard University 2008, Ph.D. thesis).
[26] *Ibid.*, 2; the mentioned scholars are: von Balthasar 2003: 193-205; Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*. Chicago and La Salle, IL. (ed. 2 1995), pp. 373-381; John Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*. Trans. Yves Dubois. Crestwood, NY, 1987, p. 232; Cooper 2005: 208-227; Paul M. Blowers, *Exegesis and Spiritual Pedagogy in Maximus the Confessor. An Investigation of the Quaestiones ad Thalassium*. Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity, 7. Notre Dame, IN. 1991, pp. 254-255. For the three specific assertions that these scholars make see Partridge 2008: 119-120.

does not proceed from one of the previous opposites, i.e., male and female are not derived from the inhabited world as inhabited world and paradise derive from the earth, earth and heaven derive from the sensible, and sensible and intelligible derive from the created that is the opposite in the division between uncreated and created.[27] Partridge's overall argument is that, for Maximus, overcoming of the male/female division does not bring the two together into a simultaneous unity and distinction, but virtually obliterates their gender-based differences.[28] Cameron's claim finds support in *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 48:[29]

> [Christ] united human beings in such a way that in a mysterious way through the Spirit he laid aside the differentiation between male and female and recreated the nature of each so that they were free from their particular passions.

For Andrew Louth, such a statement is a clear indication that the original creation according to Maximus "transcends sexuality," and therefore Louth says that "Maximus does not believe in what the poet Amy Clampitt has called 'the archetypal cleft of sex.'"[30] The features that characterize the present existence of human beings as male and female will be discarded as they are being transformed after the manner of the risen Christ. But if, with the obliteration of the sexual division, men and women are revealed "properly and truly to be simply human beings,"[31] how one should think of these non-gendered people? Partridge is careful to show that Maximus is departing from the ascetical tradition that perceives the transformation of the sexes as acquiring "perfect manhood" (ἄνδρα τέλειον), a concept based on Ephesians 4:11-13.[32] This is a good example of how Maximus faithfully remains within the legacy of his ascetical and mystical predecessors, and yet appropriates that legacy by giving it what can be called a distinct Maximian flavour. Quoting *Ambigua* 41, Partridge indicates the important change of vocabulary so that "instead of Christ becoming ἄνδρα τέλειον, 'a perfect man,' he becomes τέλειος ἄνθρωπος 'a perfect human being.'"[33] Maximus uses gender language freely, as when he speaks of the perfected humanity and calls the soul "a virgin mother of Christ."[34] For Partridge this means that "the purgation of difference ... is part of a larger project, namely the transformation of human generation."[35] This opinion is shared by A. K. Squire who in his final comments in his article on the soul as virgin mother writes that for Maximus "the Theotokos is seen as the type of the perfection of every Christian soul."[36]

[27] *Ibid.*, 133.
[28] *Ibid.*, 118-169; the main argument is based on a passage from *Ambigua* 41.
[29] *QThal.* 48 (CCSG 7:333.67-70; trans. Meeks 1974:165).
[30] Louth 1996: 79.
[31] *Amb.* 41 (PG 91: 1312A; trans Louth 1996: 158).
[32] Partridge 2008: 144.
[33] *Ibid.*, 146.

However, Partridge is, like von Balthasar, also making too much of Maximus' view. One has to be careful not to dismiss any gender-distinct images from the perfected state of humanity. Otherwise one will have significant difficulties in explaining the fact that Maximus applies a motherly image to the τέλειος ἄνθρωπος. This allows one to envision gender-related qualities to say the least. For example, in *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 40, Maximus applies both male and female qualities to the soul. Interpreting the miracle at Cana, Maximus identifies the human mind with the bridegroom, and faith with the mother of the Λόγος, so that by this logic the Λόγος can be called the "Son of our faith."[37] Even more strikingly, Maximus uses marriage language to describe the union between the human mind (the bridegroom) and virtue (the bride):[38]

> The invited Λόγος, honouring their spousehood, comes benevolently to their wedding, binds tightly the bond of their spiritual marriage, and through its own wine spiritually warms-through their yearning for spiritual fertility.

This is classic Maximus. He would not let anything that God has created, as is the case with the passions, be left completely futile in God's renewed world. The sexes, marriage, and sexual procreation might be something provisional and not part of the λόγος of God's creation, and yet all of these categories are kept, one can even say redeemed and transformed, as part of the dynamic of the deified humanity. Partridge's reading of Maximus' view of the sexual division has merit when it is applied to that specific category only. But it appears that Maximus' language on this theme, as with many others in his works, resists neat sys-

[34] *Or. Dom.* (CCSG 23: 50.399-402; trans. Berthold 1985: 109).
[35] Partridge 2008: 159.
[36] Aelred K. Squire. 1966. "The Soul as Virgin and Mother in Maximus the Confessor." *Studia Patristica* 8.2: 451-461. 461.
[37] *QThal.* 40 (CCSG 7: 273.127).
[38] *Ibid.*, 273.116-120.

tematization and retains many paradoxes. As with the passions, gender and sexual procreation are borderline phenomena, the result of God's provisional intervention made in foreknowledge of the human fall. Nevertheless, their concept and principle of work are incorporated right into the heart of the new humanity which is accessible even in this fallen world. As they decide to relate to each other on the basis of their common *human* λόγος, men and women on this earth anticipate the heavenly and angelic way of existence about which Jesus speaks in Matthew 22:30, a verse that Maximus quotes verbatim in *Expositio orationis dominicae* in the context of his discussion of the male/female division.[39] Furthermore, Partridge's interpretation of Maximus keeps a very narrow focus on the topic of sexuality, offering Maximus' vision of the gender transformation as a theological key to unlock contemporary discourse on gender and sexuality on behalf of the view that gender and sexuality are two different things. The lack of substantial engagement with Maximus' ascetical vision for the perfected humanity does not allow one to assess Partridge's argument from within a crucial aspect of Maximus' thought. Bearing in mind that, for Maximus, the transformation of the male/female into a perfect human being inevitably includes the abolition of the sexual drive as such, one wonders how his overall teaching can be offered as a theological key to the contemporary debate over gender and sexuality issues.

Besides the question of the abolishment of the male/female division, there is still the question of how the distinction between individual human beings is to be observed. If the unification of the human sexes into one perfect humanity is not to collapse into monism, each individual human being must retain its distinctive characteristics. This feature of Maximus' thought has been elaborated upon by Melchisedec Törönen in his *Union and Distinction in the Thought of St. Maximus the Confessor*. Törönen's overall conclusion is summarized in one sentence in the epilogue:[40]

> In philosophical terms, Maximus' system overcomes dualism without collapsing into monism; and his theology without falling into pantheism presents, on the one hand, a "theophanic" ontology, and without becoming Origenism commends, on the other hand, a spirituality of deification.

[39] *Or. dom.* (CCSG 23: 43.295-296; trans. Berthold 1985: 107).

[40] M. Törönen, *Union and Distinction in the Thought of St. Maximus the Confessor*, Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford 2007, p. 198.

The perfected individual human beings must retain their distinctive characteristics if they are to be identified as persons. The question remains whether the abolition of sexuality in an absolute manner does not somehow deprive each person of continuity with their previous gendered existence. After all, if Maximus can use gender language for perfected categories, what is the basis of understanding such imagery if there is no longer such a point of reference? Furthermore, it has been seen in this analysis that Maximus, together with Gregory of Nyssa, does find place for the re-educated and transformed passions. Following this logic, one cannot make a definite statement about the same re-education and transformation of the genders, but it certainly leaves space for the possibility of implying a similar conclusion.

To exemplify this, one can add to this the overall view of Maximus on the overcoming of the divisions, especially when he speaks of the overcoming of the final division, namely that between God and His creation. The overcoming of the ultimate division happens through love, in which human creatures "become completely whatever God is, save at the level of being...."[41] Sinful, temporal, and provisional aspects of created existence are to be discarded. This is not, however, to the detriment of personal uniqueness. On the contrary, each person in the body of Christ has a specific indispensable role, so that the more particularly functional one member of the body is the more harmonious and united is the body itself.[42] As the believers make the radical step into oneness, distinctiveness is not lost. For Maximus, that means only one thing: "Their concurrence shows forth the perfect man created according to Christ."[43] Each member does so by his or her own will, just as Christ, both God and man, is sinless by nature "so can we ... be in him without sin by the use of our free will."[44] Maximus has no doubts that the uniting moment happens by grace, but only provided that man willingly participates in it. If man is to be a person, an image of God, he must be a free agent, as Polycarp Sherwood observes, when he comments that the most important concern

[41] *Amb.* 41 (PG 91: 1308B; trans. Louth 1996: 158).

[42] *Or.Dom.* (CCSG 23: 54.470-55.489; trans. Berthold 1985: 111).

[43] *Ibid.*, 55.489-490; 111.

[44] *Capit.* 1.84 (PG 90: 1164C; trans. Berthold 1985: 166).

of Maximus' in the journey of man's unity with God is the so called "gnomic reform"—the reform or transformation of the free will.[45]

It can be concluded then that the journey towards the uniting of all creation, as Maximus sees it, happens through the overcoming of the divisions, but not through the abolishing of the distinctions. In other words, the disunity is transformed, not through melting, but through sharpening. This means that, as the layers of bluntness are taken away, the natural features of human nature are being recovered, and each member can fit alongside the others in the order of creation, strengthening its unity, and putting an end to the "warring" principle in which each entity engages against its counterpart in the pursuit of pleasure. Thus sexuality, being the driving power of perverted passions and forbidden pleasure, needs to be eradicated, but this does not necessitate excluding gender language in totality. After all, to understand itself as Christ's bride—a feature that Maximus never questions—the church needs to be able to think of itself with a reference to the female gender.

A close reading of Maximus reveals subtle nuances that surprise the reader with a twist in the plot. With Maximus, it has been seen that neither pleasure nor pain can be read at their face value. Pleasure may be the starting point of the human fall, but it is far from being inherently negative. On the contrary, God had intended it to be the root of an unhindered spiritual relationship with man. Pain is first of all presented by Maximus as a necessary corrective to pleasure gone wrong. But pain is not part of the original creation of man, and once it is abolished death is overcome by stopping its vicious cycle. After the example of Christ, the believer transcends pain and experiences celestial joy. This summit is only possible because sexual division has been overcome by Christ's Incarnation, in whom all believers reiterate their personal overcoming of the death that is bound to come with a life conceived by sexual intercourse.

[45] P. Sherwood, *St Maximus the Confessor: the Ascetic Life, the four Centuries on Charity.* Westminster, MD and London. Ancient Christian Writers, 21. Westminster, MD and London 1955, p. 81.

"Hypostasis," "Person," "Individual," "Mode": A Comparison between the Terms that Denote Concrete Being in St Maximus' Theology

Dionysios Skliris

In both the philosophy and the theology of the last century, there has been a great interest in the notions of the person and the individual, as for example in movements like existentialism and personalism. This interest has also exercised an influence in the study of Maximus the Confessor (among other Church Fathers). The question that is raised and preoccupies scholars is especially what would be an accurate rendering of how Maximus understands the relation between hypostasis, person, individual, and the mode of existence (τρόπος ὑπάρξεως) or modality (τρόπος) in general. This question is relevant to the evaluation of the importance attributed by Maximus to concepts like the *hypostatic union* and its mode. It also takes place in the context of a dilemma between the priority of systematic theology or patrology. That is, on the one hand one feels the need to actualize Maximus' thought in view of the modern concept of the individual and certain personalistic objections against it. On the other hand, from a patrological point of view, one should be cautious not to project a modern existentialist or personalist way of thinking back on the writer of the seventh century[1].

[1] This theological debate is based mostly on the following works (among many others that are written on the same topic): Bathrellos, Demetrios. *The Byzantine Christ. Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of St Maximus the Confessor.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; De Halleux, André, *Patrologie et oecuménisme*, Leuven: 1990, p. 113-214; Larchet, Jean-Claude, *La Divinisation de l'Homme selon Saint Maxime le Confesseur.* Paris: Cerf, 1996; Larchet, Jean-Claude, *Saint Maxime le Confesseur (580-662),* Paris: Cerf, 2003; Larchet, Jean-

In this paper we are going to make some remarks on the context in which Maximus uses the different terms that denote concrete being, namely the terms "hypostasis" (ὑπόστασις), "person" (πρόσωπον) and "individual" (ἄτομον), and to investigate to which "categories" of being each one of them might or might not apply. We will afterwards briefly examine the terms "mode of existence" (τρόπος ὑπάρξεως) and "mode" (τρόπος) in general, and their relation to the above. In modern discussions of patristic theology there is an ongoing debate about whether such terms—or at least some of them—are synonymous or not. This question is frequently treated in relation to modern personalism and to whether or not we can trace some similarities with patristic thought in general and with that of Maximus in particular. One similar question is whether or not we can detect in one or more of these three terms (ὑπόστασις, πρόσωπον, ἄτομον) the "ἰδιαζόντως ἀνθρώπινον," that is the particular difference that distinguishes man from animals and other non-human beings.[2] We believe that an examination of some crucial passages, where these terms appear, can lead us to five quite revealing observations:

1. There are passages that refer to Triadology and Christology where the terms "hypostasis" and "person" seem to be synonymous.[3] These passages are following the logic of the Trinitarian dogma, as it was developed especially by the Cappadocian Fathers, as well as of the Chalcedonian dogma.

2. There are passages that refer to anthropology or have a general metaphysical interest, where the three terms, or two among them, are

Claude, *Personne et Nature. La Trinité- Le Christ- L'homme.* Paris: Cerf, 2011; Louth, Andrew, *Maximus the Confessor.* London & New York: Routledge, 1996; Sherwood, Polycarp, *The Earlier Ambigua of St. Maximus the Confessor and his Refutation of Origenism,* "Studia Anselmiana" no 36, Rome: 1955; Thunberg, Lars, *Microcosm and Mediator, The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor,* Lund: 1965; Törönen, Melchisedek, *Union and Distinction in the Thought of St Maximus the Confessor.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007; Zizioulas, John, *Communion & Otherness. Further Studies in Personhood and the Church.* London & New York: T&T Clark: 2006.

[2] For example, a very clear negative answer to this question is given in: Törönen, Melchisedek, *Union and Distinction in the Thought of St Maximus the Confessor.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 55-59.

[3] Cf. *Opusc.* 10, PG 91,136C- 137A; 13, 145-149A; *Epistle* 15 *PG* 91,548B-D. For an analysis of the theology of the *Opusc.*, as well as a discussion of questions of authenticity some of them raise cf. Larchet, Jean-Claude, "Introduction". In: Saint Maxime le Confesseur, *Opuscules Théologiques et Polémiques*, Paris: Cerf 1998, p. 8-108.

closely related[4]. Especially in *Opusculum* 26 *PG* 91,276 AB, Maximus is offering definitions where the three concepts seem to refer to the same reality. But by the term "ἄτομον" we are considering it as a logical assemblage of properties, whereas by the term "ὑπόστασις" we are considering it in its ontological aspect:

> Ἄτομόν ἐστιν, κατὰ μὲν φιλοσόφους ἰδιωμάτων συναγωγή, ὧν τὸ ἄθροισμα ἐπ' ἄλλου θεωρεῖσθαι οὐ δύναται· κατὰ δὲ τοὺς Πατέρας, οἷον Πέτρος ἢ Παῦλος, ἤ τις ἕτερος τῶν καθ' αὑτά ἰδίοις προσωπικοῖς ἰδιώμασι τῶν ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων ἀφοριζόμενος. Ὑπόστασις δέ ἐστιν, κατὰ μὲν φιλοσόφους, οὐσία μετὰ ἰδιωμάτων· κατὰ δὲ τοὺς Πατέρας, ὁ καθ' ἕκαστον ἄνθρωπος, προσωπικῶς τῶν ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων ἀφοριζόμενος.
>
> An individual is, for the philosophers, a collection of idioms the sum of which cannot be observed in any other. For the Fathers, it is something like Peter or Paul or someone else who is distinguished by other men thanks to his or her proper personal idioms. A hypostasis is for the philosophers an essence with idioms. For the Fathers it is the particular man, who is personally distinguished from other men.

It is to be noted that the terms "personal" and "personally" appear only in the definition of the Fathers and not in that of the philosophers. Additionally, the definition of the Fathers refers to concrete human persons and not to a general logical or metaphysical frame. But what is, in our opinion, crucial is that these passages do not refer to the Trinity or to Christ. They refer either to anthropology, or, from an ampler philosophical stand-point, to a general metaphysic that concerns created being.

3. Additionally, when Maximus refers to the Trinitarian God, we find the terms "ὑπόστασις" and "πρόσωπον," but *not* the term "ἄτομον."[5]

4. Besides, Maximus insists that Christ is not an individual ("ἄτομον"). This assertion means two things: i) Firstly, that Christ does not

[4] Cf. *Opusc.*14 PG 91,152A-B; 16, 201C; 18, 213A; 23, 261A-B; 264C; 26, 276 A-B; *Ep.* 13 PG 91,528A-B; *Ep.* 15 PG 91,545A; 552B-D.

[5] Cf. among other passages: *Ambigua ad Iohannem* (from now on: *Amb.Io.*) *PG* 91, 1400D-1401A; Laga, Carl & Steel, Carlos, *Maximi Confessoris "Quaestiones ad Thalassium"* (from now on: *QThal.*), I, (qu. I-LV), *Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca* (from now on: *CCSG*) 7, Turnhout: 1980, 7,205,60, PG 90,361D; Van Deun, Peter, *Maximi Confessoris Opuscula Exegetica Duo*, CCSG 23, Turnhout: 1991, *Or. Dom.* , CCSG 23,54,461-463, PG 90,892D-893A; Boudignon, Christian, *Maximi Confessoris, Mystagogia* (from now on: *Myst.*), *CCSG* 69, Turnhout: 2011, 69,52,840-53,863, PG 91,701A ; *Epistle* 15 *PG* 91,548B-D.

comprise a human individual. We avoid thus a heresy of Nestorian type.[6] But also that: ii) Christ is *not at all* an individual, but only a composed person or hypostasis. In the passage *Opusc.* 16 PG 201D-204A, Maximus explains the reasons for this, and it is mostly there that we can find how he understands the term "ἄτομον":

> [...]οὐδὲ ἄτομον κυρίως τὸ κατὰ Χριστὸν σύνθετον λέγεται πρόσωπον. Οὐ γὰρ σχέσιν ἔχει πρὸς τὴν ἐκ τοῦ γενικωτάτου γένους διὰ τῶν ὑπάλληλα καθιεμένην γενῶν πρὸς τὸ εἰδικώτατον εἶδος διαίρεσιν, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τὴν οἰκείαν πρόοδον περιγράφουσαν. [...] Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄτομόν ἐστι, πρὸς εἶδος ἢ γένος ἀναγόμενον, ἢ κατ' οὐσίαν ὑπὸ τούτων περιγραφόμενον· ἀλλ' ὑπόστασις σύνθετος, τὴν φυσικὴν τῶν ἄκρων διαίρεσιν ἐν ἑαυτῇ κατ' ἄκρον ταυτίζουσα, καὶ εἰς ἓν ἄγουσα τῇ τῶν οἰκείων ἑνώσει μερῶν.
>
> The composed person of Christ cannot be named an individual properly speaking, because it is not related to the division which descends from the most general genus through the subordinate genera toward the most specific species, and which contains in this its own process. [...] Because He is neither an individual that is reducible to a species or a genus, or circumscribable by them according to essence. But He is a composed hypostasis that identifies in itself extremely the natural division of the two extremes, and brings them in one by the union of the parts that belong to it.

Maximus means here that Christ is not an individual because he does not belong to a logical and metaphysical hierarchy, which would start from the most general genus ("γενικώτατον γένος"), proceed through the subordinate genera, and end at the most specific species ("εἰδικώτατον εἶδος") that is the individual. On the contrary, Christ is a completely unique reality that does not belong *qua* Christ[7] to any genus or species. He is therefore not an individual. But, He can, on the contrary, be characterized as a *hypostasis* or a *person*[8].

5. There are passages where the term "hypostasis" also refers to animals. For example, in *Opusc.* PG 248C: "Ποιότητα [...] ὑποστατικὴν δὲ

[6] Cf. *Opusc.* 16, PG 204B-C.

[7] It is important to underline that Christ does not belong to a species and genera *as Christ*. This is not the same as to assert that His created human nature (did or) did not belong to a species and genera. The latter is totally another problem which we will not discuss here.

[8] Cf. *Ep.* 13 PG 91,528A-532C.

τοῦ τινος ἀνθρώπου γρυπόν, ἢ σιμόν.Η τοῦ τινος ἵππου τὸ ψαρὸν ἢ ξανθόν. Οὕτω δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἔχει γενητῶν ἁπάντων οὐσιῶν καὶ ὑποστάσεων [...]." ("the hypostatic quality [...] like the 'squashed' or 'aquiline' nose of a man or the dapple-gray or chestnut color of a horse. The same is the case for all other created essences and hypostases [...] ").

We could then synthesize these five observations in the following conclusions: The term "individual" is a metaphysical and logical term. One is entitled to use it only if there is an integration in a metaphysical and logical hierarchy, where the individual is subordinated to species and genera.[9] Christ is not an individual on the one hand because He does not comprise a human individual, and on the other because *qua* Christ, that is as a hypostasis, He does not belong to any such species or genus. This last remark could arguably also explain why the term "individual" is not employed to describe God. For Maximus, God is an absolutely simple reality that is not distinguished in genera, species and individuals. Such a hierarchy exists only in the created being. In God there is only a distinction between, on the one hand, the hypostases or persons and, on the other, the essence or nature. Both are ontological categories that are equally fundamental without a logical and metaphysical hierarchy that would allow us to speak of genus, species, or individual. And since Christ is the hypostasis of the Son, He is not an individual that is neither eternally as the Son, nor in the history (and in the eschatological kingdom) as the composed hypostasis of Christ that unites divine and human nature. It is true that sometimes Maximus prefers to speak of a composed hypostasis or person of the Christ rather than of a hypostasis of the Son that is incarnated. But he insists that this composed person or hypostasis is not an individual. And we could conclude that one reason for that (along of course with the desire to refute both Nestorianism and Monophysitism) is that for Maximus the fact that Christ is not a composed individual is related to the fact that the Son is not an individual in His eternal existence either. There is thus

[9] Cf. the passages *Ambig.Io.* PG 91,1312C-D; *Opusc.* 14, PG 91,149B; 21, 249A; *Ep.* 13 *PG* 91,517D. In *Opusc.* 23 PG 91,264C, in an Aristotelian way the "preceding" existence ("προηγουμένως") refers to the individual and not to the general. We find a similar metaphysical view in *Opusc.* 14 PG 91,149B. For the question of the authenticity of the definition that appears in *Opusc.* 23 PG 91,264C, cf. Larchet, Jean-Claude, "Introduction". In: Saint Maxime le Confesseur, *Opuscules Théologiques et Polémiques*, Paris: Cerf 1998, p. 21-22.

no individual in Christology and Triadology. One relevant problem is whether Maximus understands the hypostasis of Christ as the preexisting hypostasis of the Son or as a hypostasis that is a *quasi* product of the union of the two natures.[10] It seems that the term "hypostasis" has a very concrete character in Maximus. It means the subsistence of the nature or, in the case of Christ, of His two natures. Maximus chooses therefore the term "composed hypostasis" as a very concrete way to express the subsistence of the two natures. This hypostasis is not an individual because it is a *sui generis* reality that cannot be repeated: there cannot be many "Christs" or a species of Christ,[11] which would be blasphemous even as a thought. But also because the Son is not an individual in His eternal existence.

We should also underline the importance of the concept of "hypostatic union" for Maximian soteriology. The latter is considered as the orthodox expression in contradistinction to the term "natural union" that has a monophysite flavor. We think that we can detect here another difference between the notion of hypostasis and that of the individual. The hypostasis can synthesize different natural elements, making them subsist inside the same concrete being. For example, the hypostasis of Christ synthesizes the divine and the human nature.[12] Or, in anthropology, the hypostasis of every human being unites the different natures of his or her body and soul.[13] Of course the latter is prescribed by human nature, whereas the Incarnation of God is a completely supernatural event. Nevertheless, in both cases we find a similar notion of hypostasis, namely that it is a factor of unification and synthesis. The individual results through a process of logical and metaphysical division that arrives at a certain point where this division is no longer possible without losing the concrete character of the being in question. In other words, even if the hypostasis and the individual could *coincide* in being applied to the same (created) being, they are describing it under different *aspects*. The hypostasis is describing it in its aspect of *synthesis*,

[10] This question is treated in a very interesting way in: Demetrios Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ. Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of St Maximus the Confessor.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 105-107.

[11] Cf. *Epistle* 13 *PG* 91,517D.

[12] Cf. *Op.Th.Pol.* 16 *PG* 91,204A: "ὑπόστασις σύνθετος, τὴν φυσικὴν τῶν ἄκρων διαίρεσιν ἐν ἑαυτῇ κατ' ἄκρον ταυτίζουσα, καὶ εἰς ἓν ἄγουσα τῇ τῶν οἰκείων ἑνώσει μερῶν".

[13] Cf. *Epistle* 15, *PG* 91,553A-C.

that is how this concrete being is synthesizing its constituent elements in order to form a unique whole, whereas the individual describes it in its aspect of being a product of *analysis*, that is as the end of a logical and metaphysical division that finally arrives at an indivisible core. Besides, the term "hypostasis" has a more ontological character. It denotes the fact that a being succeeds in existing as a concrete, distinct, and independent entity ("καθ' ἑαυτὸ ὑφεστός"[14]). On the contrary, the term "individual" has a more logical nuance. It signifies a logical subject that, on one hand, assembles its non-essential properties, and, on the other, receives the attribution of species and genera.[15] Last but not least, it is important to mention that Maximus does not hesitate to apply the term "hypostatic quality" in the case of animals. But he never uses the term "person" in referring to such animals.

We could then proceed in summarizing more our conclusions: The term "ἄτομον" is metaphysical- logical and refers exclusively to created being as a metaphysical and logical hierarchy of genera, species and individuals. It does not refer to the simple and transcendent reality of God or to Christ as a hypostasis composed of a divine and a human nature. The term "ὑπόστασις" has, as we have seen, a very concrete ontological character: It is the act of coming into existence (or in the case of God to be caused personally) as a concrete being that can make its nature subsist in a distinct mode. This term seems able to apply even to animals, or even to other beings that could subsist as concrete and circumscribable entities with some degree of internal coherence. The term "πρόσωπον" is identified to hypostasis in a series of passages. Nevertheless, it is never used to denote animals or other beings that are not Divine or human persons or angels. This is rather an *argumentum ex silentio*, but we could arguably claim that the term "πρόσωπον" is related to God and to elements that constitute His "image" in other beings, like intellection ("νοερόν") and freedom ("αὐτεξούσιον"), whereas the term "ὑπόστασις" seems to have an ampler ontological content. For example, in *Ambig.Ioh. PG* 91,1293D, the term "person" is applied to angels, and this is related to the fact that, on

[14] *Op.Th.Pol.* 23 *PG* 91,261B.

[15] Cf. *Op.Th.Pol.* 26 *PG* 276A. Also, the passage "Ὑπόστασίς ἐστιν οὐσία τις μετὰ ἰδιωμάτων, ἡ οὐσία τις τῶν καθ' ἕκαστα περιληπτικὴ τῶν ἐν τῷ οἰκείῳ ἀτόμῳ πάντων ἰδιωμάτων" (*Epistle* 13, *PG* 91,528A-B) shows exactly that hypostasis is an essence, or at least something essential that comprises the individual as an assemblage of properties.

one hand, they are intelligent natures ("νοεραὶ οὐσίαι") and, on the other, that they bear a name ("ὄνομα").

Therefore, if we would like to proceed to a unification of the diverse applications of these terms that appear in different passages, we could summarize thus the fields of application of each term : 1. The term "person" (πρόσωπον) is applied to God, to human beings and to angels (for the latter cf. *Ambig.Io. PG* 91,1293D).[16] 2. The term individual (ἄτομον) is not applied to God nor to Christ, but only to created being. It is applied to any being that could exist as a concrete particularization of a species and a genus inside a logical-metaphysical hierarchy. 3. Hypostasis (ὑπόστασις) is an ampler notion that comprises the applications of both the person and the individual: that is, Divine Persons, human persons, and also every created being that can come into existence through a subsistence of its nature in a concrete particular. We think that such a summary could clarify from a patrological point of view the use of these terms in Maximus (which is possibly not the same as the one existing in other Fathers).

We can now come to the term "mode" (τρόπος). A particular problem is the relation between *tropos* and hypostasis. Here a distinction should be made between, on the one hand, a particular application of *tropos* that is the mode of existence ("τρόπος ὑπάρξεως") that appears in a few passages with a very concrete meaning, and, on the other, the general notion of *tropos* that is extremely widespread in the work of Maximus and has a variety of significations. The term "τρόπος ὑπάρξεως" appears mainly in the context of Trinitarian theology. It is inherited by the Cappadocian tradition and its continuation that was rather preoccupied with Trinitarian issues in the context of the struggle against Arianism and Pneumatomachy. There are passages where the term "mode of existence" ("τρόπος ὑπάρξεως") is identified with hypostasis, as in *Ambig.Io.* PG 91,1400D-1401A ("τριὰς γάρ ἐστιν ἡ μονὰς ὡς ἐν τελείαις οὖσα τελεία ταῖς ὑποστάσεσιν, ἤγουν τῷ τῆς ὑπάρξεως τρόπῳ") and *Myst. CCSG* 69,53,856-857, PG 91,701A: "τριάς ἐστι ταῖς ὑποστάσεσι καὶ τῷ τρόπῳ τῆς ὑπάρξεως ἡ ἁγία μονάς." In other passages the "τρόπος ὑπάρξεως" refers to the particular inside the Trinity, whereas the *logos* to the essence and to the general or common "Monad" of God.[17] Finally, in *Ambig. Thom.*

[16] It is true that the nonapplicability of the term "πρόσωπον" to animals is deduced *ex silentio*, but we think that it is a silence that is quite telling.

[17] Cf. *Ambig.Ioh.* PG 91,1136C; 1260D; *QThal.* CCSG 7,77,18, PG 90,285A; CCSG 7,205,59-60, PG 90,361D; *Or.Dom.* CCSG 23,54,461-463, PG 90,892D-893A; *Cap. Theo.* PG

CCSG 48,7, 32-38,[18] PG 91,1036C the *tropos* is referring to the "how" of the subsistence ("πῶς ὑφεστάναι"), whereas the *logos* is referring generally to being ("εἶναι"). We could therefore conclude that the term "τρόπος ὑπάρξεως" is in general identified with hypostasis, or at least that it is referring to the hypostatical order of otherness and particularity in contradistinction to the essential order of community, and that this term mainly appears in a Trinitarian context. There is however an anthropological use of the term that refers to the mode by which passions subsist "in us" ("ἐν ἡμῖν"), that is "in us, human beings" (*QThal. CCSG* 7,25,134, PG 90,249C). Here we do not have a clear identification between "τρόπος ὑπάρξεως" and hypostasis. But we could understand that it is a mode by which the passions subsist, or, if we could use an expression that was popular in the age of Maximus, the mode by which passions are "enhypostasized" in us human beings. In other words, the "τρόπος ὑπάρξεως" could mean a mode by which something subsists inside a concrete being. But even if we don't choose to make this interpretation, the fact remains that the great majority or even totality of the occurrences of "τρόπος ὑπάρξεως" refers to the hypostatical order of particularity.

Nevertheless, these occurrences are but a very minute part of the totality of occurrences of *tropos* in Maximus' work.[19] The term sometimes has logical or theoretical content as in "τρόπος τῆς διαφορᾶς" (mode of difference) or "τρόπος τῆς θεωρίας" (mode of contemplation). An ethical meaning is quite frequent, as in "τρόπος τῆς ἀρετῆς" (mode of virtue), "τρόπος τῆς κακίας" (mode of vice) or a historical meaning as in "τρόπος τῆς οἰκονομίας" (mode of economy), etc. Most of these expressions have some relation either directly or indirectly to hypostasis as a concrete particularity. But this relation is not as evident as in the term "τρόπος ὑπάρξεως" when it is applied to Trinitarian theology. In view of this fact, there are various tendencies among different specialists. There are those that tend to closely link *tropos* and hypostasis, whereas in more recent times, there are specialists like J.-C. Larchet, who criticize what

90,1220A. The exact formulation of the distinction between the Monad and the Trinity might vary in the above passages, but we notice nevertheless a common frame of thought.

[18] Janssens, Bart, *Maximi Confessoris Ambigua ad Thomam Una cum Epistula Secunda ad Eundem, CCSG* 48, Turnhout: 2002.

[19] Cf. Larchet, Jean-Claude, *La Divinisation de l'Homme selon Saint Maxime le Confesseur*. Paris: Cerf, 1996, p. 143-147.

they perceive as a haste in some scholars to identify *tropos* with hypostasis in a personalistic context.[20] Larchet argues that *tropos* may be due to the hypostasis, but it is also a mode of the *nature* that is enhypostasized, and he generally follows an analytic approach in distinguishing different meanings of the term in different contexts.[21]

It is true that to make an equation *tropos* = "τρόπος ὑπάρξεως" =hypostasis without qualification would be arbitrary, but this is more true in its first part (*tropos* = "τρόπος ὑπάρξεως"). Still it seems that it is very difficult to homogenize all uses of the term *tropos* and subsume them under a single meaning. It is thus indeed wiser to follow an analytic approach and always give attention to other terms that are qualified by or contrasted with the term *tropos*. Of course the most important among them is the "τρόπος ὑπάρξεως" that denotes a mode of existence of the nature that is quite closely to be identified with hypostasis. In some anthropological and historical contexts, *tropos* seems to denote a state of nature due to the hypostasis. Whereas one also finds cases where *tropos* has a logical and theoretical significance, and consequently its relation with hypostasis is quite feeble. One interpretative dilemma is whether or not we should distinguish between, on the one hand, cases where Maximus uses the term in a technical sense that is closer to his particular way of thinking and, on the other, cases where he reproduces the common usage of the term in his time. Such common senses in the period, when he lived and wrote, would include for example *tropos* as an ethical trait or a logical or rhetorical modality, but also the signification of "species," of "form," and of "figure."[22] Still we believe that we should not show haste in distinguishing the technical uses of the term from the nontechnical ones, because the criterion for such a distinction would inevitably be formed by our own line of interpretation and we would thus be involved in a vicious cycle. It is wiser then to examine all occurrences of the term *tropos* and accord nevertheless a greater (but not exclusive) significance to those where *tropos* is used in contradistinction to the term *logos*, as Maximus is trying to solve specific theological and philosophical problems through these couple of concepts.

[20] Cf. Larchet, Jean-Claude, *La Divinisation de l'Homme selon Saint Maxime le Confesseur*. Paris: Editions de Cerf, 1996, p. 145-146.

[21] Larchet, Jean-Claude, *La Divinisation...*, p. 141-151.

[22] Lampe, G.W.H., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961, p. 1414-1415.

In concluding therefore what the relation of the term *tropos* is with other terms that denote concrete being, we could affirm that as "τρόπος ὑπάρξεως" it could be considered identical to "hypostasis" or very close to it. It refers mostly to Trinitarian theology but does not seem to be incompatible to created being, where it denotes the subsistence of elements in a concrete being. The term *tropos* in general could denote even concrete modalities that do not however constitute independent physical entities. For example, it could signify modalities of logical, intellectual, or theoretical entities or modalities that beings receive through different historical events. In its field of application, *tropos* is thus *ampler* than the other three concepts of "hypostasis," "person," and "individual." Nevertheless, its most characteristic use is when it is contrasted with *logos*, in order to denote a modality that does not annul or corrupt a certain reason of being but can coexist with it.[23] We think that Maximus was trying to achieve in this way a certain synthesis between, on the one hand, a "Hellenic" demand for permanence, that would allow theoretical contemplation and which is satisfied by the concept of *logos*, and, on the other, a "Judaistic" demand for freedom and contingency inside history, where a certain dialogue between God and man can take place through miraculous divine interventions, human answers, and surprising divine counter-answers. All the latter are described thanks to a concept of *tropos*, that helps however to guarantee the initial "reasonableness" (*logos*) of God's will—that is, God does not annul His primordial salvific plan, but only modifies it in a dialogue that takes into account man's reactions.

We would like to conclude the patrological observations of our paper with two remarks, or rather questions, that are more relevant to systematic theology and to the actuality of Maximus' thought in our own age, which is also a principal preoccupation of the current conference. The first is the issue whether an opposition between "person" and "individual" is legitimate from the point of view of a systematic Orthodox theology that both receives its inspiration from Patristic theology and tries to actualize it in a different cultural context. As we have tried to show, there is one very concrete foundation in Maximus' thought for such a distinction, namely the fact that the term "individual" does not

[23] Cf. the characteristic passage *Amb.Io. PG* 91,1341D-1344A.

apply to Trinitarian theology and to Christology, whereas the term "person" does apply to them. But this means that if a theologian chooses to build a theological system on the concept of person as it is found in Trinitarian theology and Christology and not on anthropology, psychology, or phenomenology, then such a distinction between person and individual is legitimate and indeed inevitable.[24] A further issue whether or not if this distinction between person and individual should be turned into an *opposition* between them. We believe that the latter is clearly a matter of systematic theology, and more especially of what stance a theologian decides to take toward the concept of the individual as it was developed in modernity. The latter has some traits of psychological and moral autonomy of consciousness that were not fully developed in the age of Maximus, but belong to a post-Cartesian and post-Kantian era, even though their roots might arguably be detected back in the Middle Ages. Therefore, in our view, a patrologist can only observe the difference between "individual" and "person" in Maximus. It is up to a systematic theologian to turn this difference into an opposition and thus exercise a criticism of Modernity, or to decline to do so.

[24] For example, this is the case in the theology of the Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, cf. *Communion & Otherness. Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*. London & New York: T&T Clark: 2006. It is sometimes not acknowledged by some of his critics that the point of departure of his theology of person is Trinitarian theology and Christology, and not an independent anthropology. Then it is inevitable that a certain distinction between the person and the individual will arise. If we choose to base the concept of the person on Trinitarian theology and Christology, then the person will not be an individual, because there is no individual in the Trinity or in Christ. And, if we transfer this divine and Christological notion of the person to its "image" that is to man, then in anthropology also the person will somehow be contrasted to the individual. Therefore a certain opposition between the person and the individual seems to arise from the theological methods and principles *per se* of Metropolitan John, and this is legitimately founded on a distinction traced by Maximus himself explicitly on the level of Christology and (arguably) implicitly on the other levels. One could say that the theology of person of Metropolitan John is the theology of Maximus seen from the perspective of Trinitarian theology and an eschatological Christology. On the contrary, theologians that have a historical anthropology as their point of departure might speak of man simultaneously as a person and as an individual and blur thus the fundamental difference between the two. In the thought of Maximus, the two concepts might *coincide* at the level of the concrete human being, but are *not* fully *identified* but distinguished. Then the insistence of Metropolitan John to make a contrast between the person and the individual is due, on the one hand, to the point of departure of his theology and, on the other, to his wish to answer to existential yearning of modern thought in making at the same time a sharp critic of some problems of modern civilization that did not exist at the age of Maximus.

Our second aporia is that if we try to re-actualize Maximus' theology in a "post-modern" era (or "late modern," or "late post-modern" according to one's preference), then a certain dialectic between hypostasis and person would also be theologically fertile. Until now, the actualization of Maximus' thought in modern times, (which arguably start with Protestantism and the Cartesian *cogito* and are concluded with existentialism), has given us a certain contrast between the person and the individual. We wonder if a new actualization of Maximus in a postmodern era could lead not exactly to a contrast, since that would not be legitimate, but to a dialectic between hypostasis and person. The foundation of this is that in Maximus hypostasis has a broader ontological meaning and can be applied even to animals, whereas it is rather personhood that constitutes the "ἰδιαζόντως ἀνθρώπινον," the peculiar dimension that distinguishes man from animal nature. But then if we perceive "person" as a Trinitarian, Christological, and consequently an eschatological reality that is realized only as an image in historical anthropology, we could envisage a certain dialectical tension with the concept of hypostasis, which would result in a more authentic theology of history—that is, we could observe the "personification" of hypostasis as a process that takes place dialectically inside history, and we could thus grant history its own indispensable and intrinsic significance, something that is much needed in our age. But this would be the subject for a new interpretative endeavor.

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"Knowing the Purpose of Creation Through the Power of the Resurrection"

Symposium Memoranda

by Daniel Mackay

The First Day: 18 October 2012

The St Maximus the Confessor Symposium, "Knowing the Purpose of Everything Through the Power of the Resurrection," co-hosted in Belgrade by the Belgrade Theological Faculty and the Orthodox Christian Studies Program of Fordham University, began with opening remarks by Bishop Maxim of Alhambra and the Western American Diocese, Patristics Professor at the Faculty and a Maximus scholar in his own right. Bishop Maxim introduced the new dean of the Faculty, Professor Predrag Puzović, who expressed his satisfaction at beginning his term as dean with such a grand event. He observed that St Maximus is the "most universal spirit of his time and probably [the] greatest thinker in the history of the Church. He has become the focal point of reference in modern Orthodox and Catholic dialogue." The first church dedicated to St Maximus, he noted, is in Serbia.

Bishop Maxim, chief organizer of the event, included in his welcome address greetings to panelists and guests from His Holiness Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch, and His Holiness Irinej, Serbian Orthodox Patriarch.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, in his address, noted that "The Saints represent God's gift to the world, precious beacons within the darkness of this transient world, and an example to be followed leading us to our final goal—the Kingdom of God." Among these saints, who we commemorate this weekend, is the Confessor Maximus. Born in the

sixth century and reposed in the seventh century, he, like all saints, belongs to the timelessness of the Kingdom of God, wherein we have him as a heavenly intercessor before the Throne of Christ. The Ecumenical Patriarch highlighted St Maximus' major contributions to theology in his address: his emphasis on love as the foremost of the virtues, his staunch defense of the two wills of Christ during the monothelite controversy, his distinction between the natural and the gnomic will, and his insistence that there is no natural evil, but the negligence of thoughts, from which stems mistaken actions and—important for a consideration of the contemporary ecological problem— the mistaken use of things that results from mistaken thoughts.

His Holiness Patriarch Irinej greeted the presenters and guests with an import note that by commemorating the 1350th anniversary of St Maximus' repose with this solemn symposium, we invoke the blessing of the saint. And truly his blessing was invoked! Three monks from the Holy Monastery of St Paul's on Mt. Athos arrived on the opening day of the Symposium with the incorrupt hand of the Confessor, a generous donation to the Symposium from the Igumen Parthenios. The Metropolitan of Pergamon, John Zizioulas, one of the speakers over the four-day event, served for the unveiling of the relic in the faculty chapel. The grace was evident as Maximus' life in Christ, permeated with the energies of God, was manifest through his relics that filled the faculty chapel with vivifying heavenly grace. Hundreds of pilgrims bowed down in veneration before the Paschal mystery evident in St Maximus.

Certainly, it is the power of the Resurrection manifest in his relics and holy prayers that make St Maximus important not only for his theology but his witness to holiness. Over 40 artists captured the image of this holiness, which is the divine image manifest within humanity, in a special art exhibit put together by Adrijana Krstić and Dragana Mašić to honor the subject of the Symposium. The art exhibit was also unveiled on the first night of the Symposium. Adorning the hallway that runs between the chapel and lecture hall, the artistry is a worthy tribute that connects St Maximus' spiritual and intellectual gifts to humanity.

Indeed the spiritual and the intellectual are tied together by the thread of St Maximus' witness to Christ, celebrated in this capital of the Balkans perched on a promontory above the rivers Sava and Danube. The Danube threads across Central Europe, leaving behind Proustian

landscapes of cultural artifacts as it enters the Balkan Peninsula, where self-preservation coexists with transcendence. St Maximus is a similar thread linking West and East. Here, in Belgrade, one encounters a parallel intellectual perspective threading remnants of German idealism with the lasting impact of the Byzantine legacy, which is most clearly articulated in the Logos-centered reality of St Maximus the Confessor.

The talks of the first evening, like the concluding keynote addresses, were available to all, even unregistered attendees (as well as viewers throughout the world via remote live streaming video of the event that could be viewed at the Symposium's website), and featured the important issue of the context in which St Maximus is received. The first to speak was Maximos, a monk from Simonopetra Monastery on Mt. Athos and, presently, a theology professor at Holy Cross School of Theology in Boston. Fr. Maximos spoke on "The Relevance of Maximus' Thought Today," in particular focusing on two of what he identified as three historical appropriations of the thought and writings of the Confessor: the Maximus translations of Anastasius Bibliothecarius (ca. 800-879) and John Eriugena (ca. 815-877), whose work was closely intertwined with the cultural politics of Rome and the Carolingian court of Charles the Bald and Maximus' popularity in the eleventh century Byzantine court. Both of these appropriations illustrate different sociologies of translation that reveal how contemporary preoccupations inform our reception of Maximus. At issue are the passions of the day that, until rooted out, result in the fragmentation that is indemic to our society. This fragmentation is rooted in a spiritual pathology for which Maximus offers a cure, if only we avail ourselves of his entire teaching and not only what we *think* is relevant. The third historical appropriation, which Fr. Maximos had to cut during his presentation in the interest of time, has been restored in the present publication of the proceedings.

Brian Daley, a contributor to the Belgrade symposium, was also one of the participants in first-ever symposium on St Maximus the Confessor, held in Fribourg, Switzerland, September 2-5, 1980, thus bridging the whole past generation of Maximian scholarship since Fribourg. The 2012 winner of the Ratzinger Prize, "The Nobel Prize for Theology," Daley followed with a consideration of "Maximus the Confessor, Leontius of Byzantium, and the late Aristotelian Metaphysics of the Person." Fr. Daley is a well known historical theologian specializing

in the early Church. He continued his studies of the fifth through eighth centuries on this evening, where he delved into Maximus' Christology, which culminates with Maximus' realization that Christ must himself be free as both creator and creature in one acting, free subject. By being *two*, a number that had heretofore signified division in God, the infinite becomes finite with so great a love for the world that He is able to save it. This is a Christology that is soteriological and that ventures beyond the traditional boundaries of metaphysics. There was a question and answer period, which Bishop Maxim said provided a "robust beginning to the conference."

The Second Day: 19 October 2012

As the host for the Symposium, the Belgrade Theological Faculty was also able to enrich the Symposium with its liturgical schedule. Friday began with Orthros served by Bishop David of Kruševac and Divine Liturgy presided over by Bishop Maxim of Western America. The first session of the morning was chaired by Bishop Porfirije and featured Joshua Lollar from the University of Kansas, Professor Aristotle Papanikolaou of Fordham University's Orthodox Christian Studies Program, and Adam Cooper from the Pontifical John Paul II Institute on Marriage and Family. This was a panel that was less concerned with the cosmological dimension of Maximus' work, but rather with the human dimension, especially with regard to how the human heart survives the ravages of the fallen human mind. Of course, as the Symposium continued to progress, participants would come to understand that the point of intersection between the cosmological and the terrestrial is precisely the heart, as described by one of the most eloquent writers from among the Church Fathers, well-known for his chapters on love.

Fr. Joshua began the day with a consideration of "*Pathos* and *Technê* in St Maximus the Confessor," which generated considerable interest in the question and answer period. His paper brought Maximus the Confessor's notion of *pathos*, which is the beginning of philosophy for Maximus, into contact with the contemporary and urgent question of technology and human life in the twenty-first century. Using *Ambigua* 6–8 and *Ambiguum* 45 in order to illustrate *pathos* and technology, especially with regard to developing technology for coping with an environment that afflicts passivity, Lollar takes Maximus' understanding that *pathos* resides at the heart of human nature and asks whether technological attempts to overcome human passibility constitute an altering of human nature itself.

Professor Papanikolaou followed with "Learning How to Love: St Maximus on Virtue," which unflinchingly brought contemporary issues of soldiers dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) into dialogue with Maximus' teaching on the virtues, in particular, love, the chief virtue. According to St Maximus, the human is created to learn how to love and is in constant battle against that which weakens the capacity to love. Virtues are necessary for the learning and acquisition of love: "All the virtues assist the mind in the pursuit of divine love" (1.11). Papanikolaou emphasizes St Maximus' complicated detailing of the relation of virtues and vices to the inner life of the human person and to human agency as a "progress in the love of God" (2.14), which is measured ultimately by how one relates to others, especially those to whom one feels hatred or anger.

Concluding the morning panel was Adam Cooper, whose "St Maximus on the Mystery of Marriage & the Body: A Reconsideration," Bishop Porfirije correctly noted, demonstrates that "Christianity shows great emphasis on the body." Cooper analyzed a few texts, especially *Centuries on Love* 2.30 and 2.33. These are works, sitting uncontestably within the tradition of Christian thought, that were important both for Cooper's own intellectual and spiritual formation and development and also as an important paradigm for the Pontifical John Paul II Institute of Marriage (founded 1981); his intention was to allow St Maximus to help create a context in which castaways can navigate and survive the treacherous and confusing waters of the hyper-sexualized society of the West.

During the question and answer period, Bishop Atansije (Jevtic), retired bishop of Herzegovina, who himself was a keynote speaker on the final evening, after complimenting Lollar, noted, "In Maximus' thought, his estimation of *pathos*, we are under the *pathos*, which is neither positive nor negative. The human being as created is a gift from God; it is not negative; it is rather a capacity of participating in communion and love, which is a sort of *pathos*. God's providence and wisdom are called *techniqes,* it is in the realm of art." Such is the caliber of

this Symposium that the world's foremost theologians are in the audience participating in an ongoing conversation with their peers on stage.

A second session chaired by Prof. Papanikolaou immediately followed.

First to speak was Fr. Demetrios Bathrellos on "St Maximus' Contributions to the Notion of Freedom." Bathrellos recounted that central to this notion of freedom is Maximus' treatment of the will, which includes both the rational and the subrational. Human will is primarily understood by Maximus as self-determination. It is a *natural* faculty, but its actualization in concrete acts of willing depends on the *person*. Bathrellos argued that Maximus described the will in its fallen state as dominated by ignorance and deliberation, but also as continuously oscillating between choices that may be God-pleasing or sinful. In its perfected state, as it appears in Christ, it is steadily and unhesitatingly oriented to the doing of the will of God. He concluded by arguing that this does not threaten the integrity and authenticity of human freedom, but is rather its fullest and highest form.

This talk was followed by that of the chair of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Kentucky, Professor David Bradshaw. A specialist in the history of philosophy, Bradshaw delved into the history of the will by asking when the concept of the will originated. He said that most scholars point to Stoicism or Augustine, but that the will is already present in Plato. Maximus' contribution to the will was formulated in his response to Monothelitism, which was a result of Monoenergism, where it is clear that Maximus is interested in the form natural will takes in rational beings. His famous distinction between the natural and *gnomic* will is predicated on the *gnomic* (an act of choice) will not being a faculty (which the natural will is), but an act made possible by the natural will.

The panel concluded with Professor Torstein Tollefsen, philosophy professor at the University of Oslo, considering "St Maximus' Concept of a Human Hypostasis." It is Maximus' understanding of essence that provides the basis for Tollefsen's claim about Maximus' idea of self-understanding, which revolves around Maximus' use of *ousia, dynamis,* and *energia*.

The Symposium continued in convivial fashion over lunch before returning to a session that delved deep into Maximus' notion of the

gnomic will. George Varvatsoulias presented on "Ruminative Thinking & Psychopathology Issues in the Writings of St Maximus the Confessor: An Evolutionary Psychological Perspective." Ruminative thinking is a reasoning process where individuals dwell on the same thought or theme for long time; it is characterized by focusing too much on negative appraisals about oneself. In terms of evolutionary psychology, it explains our ancestors' need to protect themselves from potential threats by adapting to and fulfilling their survival needs. Ruminative thinking literally means believing that what took place in the past will again repeat itself. In St Maximus' writings, rumination can be found under the concept of μηρυκισμὸς, which is not a regular term. This term is rarely found in his writings for he uses connotations to describe it, such as περιποιήσασθαι, συντηρῆσθαι, ἐπιφερομένων, τυποῦσθαι, when he talks of the conditions of the soul in terms of the maladaptive habit of the intellect towards impassioned thoughts.

Fr. John Panteleimon Manoussakis, Professor Philosophy at the College of Holy Cross (Worcester, Massachusetts), presented a paper only recently written that specifically addresses a controversy in Greece right now concerning the *gnomic* will: "The Dialectic of Communion and Otherness in St Maximus' Understanding of the Will," which is based on a dialectical relation between nature and self. However, Manoussakis was sure to avoid any reductive over categorization by recalling that the person is always more than its nature; for only persons can be partakers of the communion with God that began with the world's creation and will end in the great *eschaton*.

Fr. Philipp Gabriel Renczes, in "The Concept of Habitus in the Theological Anthropology of St Maximus," insisted that there is no *gnomic will* in Christ even if there is an apparent change in Christ's human will. Renezes reaches this conclusion by way of his study of *hexis*, a problematic and unsatisfying term that expresses one of the connections between human nature and the divine. *Hexis* is perhaps best considered what we might otherwise call "virtue"; it helps us understand Maximus' notion of divinization, which is the encounter of the human person with the transforming and liberating freedom of God.

After dinner, a final panel for Friday the 19th consisted of Paul Blowers' "The Interpretive Dance: Concealment, Disclosure, and Deferral of Meaning in Maximus the Confessor's Hermeneutical Theology" and

Nino Sakvarelidze's "How to Read and Understand Patristic Texts Today: Contextualization and Actualization of St Maximus' Textual and Spiritual Heritage."

Blowers, a professor of Church history at Emmanuel Christian Seminary, argued for the transformative potential possible through divine revelation, which is always through the Logos, manifest through what Blowers calls the "interpretive dance" of Maximus' hermeneutics. In the tradition of Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, and with aid from the Areopagite's notion of the divine "ecstatic" movement, Blowers argues that Maximus understands exegesis in some sense as an erotic interpretive "dance" in which the interpreter is being ecstatically drawn out of his or her intellectual and spiritual constraints into the deifying presence of the elusive Christ, who alone satisfies all desires.

Sakvarelidze's historical-critical essay deals with Maximus' reception in Georgia, and it is a keen study of terms in order to build to the hypothesis that she tests. The paper focuses on two central questions: the contextualization of St Maximus' traditional-synthetic and innovative-systematic thought within Old Georgian and the translation and transportation of St Maximus' texts and thinking into the Georgian geographical, linguistic and cultural context.

Speaking of contexts, since Maximus is the thread tying together the intellectual and the spiritual, the cultural and the noetic, how could this be better expressed than marking the mid-way point of the Symposium on St Maximus with an All-night Vigil and Divine Liturgy for the Confessor in the presence of his relics. Bishop David of Kruševac served the Vigil, and Bishop Maxim presided at the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, with Bishop David and seven other priests concelebrating. Beginning at 8 pm, the Liturgy did not conclude until a quarter past one in the morning, although to mark such messianic moments of aeonic time with a chronometer is to distort the truth behind this synaxis of the sanctified Confessor and the struggling faithful: this was eternity in a continuous anamnetic reflection of the "Resurrectional present," and it was experienced by hundreds of the faithful who came together to celebrate the eucharistic joy of our Lord and to taste what St Maximus knows—the power of the Resurrection.

The Third Day: 20 October 2012

The third day of presentations began with Christos Yannaras, the renowned philosopher and scholar who has found harmony between Heidegger and Orthodox thought in offering strong critiques of Western European philosophy; the author of more than fifty books, Yannaras delved into the treasures of the hereafter in "The Ontological Realism of our Hopes Hereafter: Conclusions from St Maximus the Confessor's Brief References." Yannaras took the paper as an opportunity to clarify the question of authority when it comes to interpreting patristic texts. He noted that we might merely refer to "the Church" in an authoritative way, but is the Church bestowed authority by Tradition and Scripture, or does the Church itself birth these elements? Yannaras answers that true authority is experienced ontologically in an ecclesial mode of existence. This mode, of course, continues after the failure of the physical form. But, if hypostasis continues and nature has run its course, what is being hypostasized? It is the grace of God, for which the person prepares throughout his life; filling the person at death, he or she becomes the substance of the hypostasis. This fundamentally ecclesiastical experience is eschatological, for it was not something completed in a glorious past, but is rather actively transported (or, rather, transformed) into a dynamic that is actuated now and continues *aeonically*. This study shed light on hermeneutical ambiguities about those things that we hope for after death.

Pascal Mueller-Jourdan, Professor of Ancient Philosophy at the Catholic University of the West in Angers, France, gave "A contextual reading of the *Ambiguum* 10 of Maximus the Confessor" in "'Where' and 'When' as Metaphysical Prerequisites for Creation." His intent was to reveal Maximus' philosophical sources, an endeavor with which Bishop Atanasije would later take issue during his keynote later in the evening. Mueller-Jourdan's work inhabits this fault line of intersection wherein the ancient philosophical tradition intersects the Patristic tradition. However, Mueller-Jourdan's well-executed paper did reveal theological consequences tied to Maximus' ideas. For example, his estimation of concrete beings is that they do not possess their being in a simple, absolute way, but in a particular way. Consequently, this raises the need for developing a theory of nature, which points Mueller-Jourdan to *Ambiguum* 10, where Maximus considers two expressions of the modality

of existence of real beings. Moreover, Mueller-Jourdan claims Maximus suggested that the two categories of space and time are not minor categories, but crucial to informing reality. By accepting that the being of all creation is located within space and time, Maximus' accepts Aristotelian categorical thinking about creation wherein place and time are *sine qua non* of contingent being. Here Muller-Jourdan's work met the eschatological aspect of Yannaras' paper as he observed, given that characteristics of being are distinguished by time and necessitate place, the *logoi* of space as well as that of time must come into being as divine wills that express a providential understanding of the uncreated. If these categories abide in God, they cannot disappear, and so they will be changed at the end of time, not destroyed. Transfiguration, therefore, of temporality will occur at the end of time.

The first panel then concluded with Alexei Nesteruk, a deacon in the Church and senior lecturer at the University of Portsmouth, who writes about science from an Orthodox perspective. His work looked at three issues relevant to contemporary science that Maximus' work helps to illustrate: 1) the knowability of the universe from the perspective of Christological anthropology, 2) modern scientific attempts of explicating *creatio ex nihilo* as the activity of mediation between the sensible and intelligible realms in creation (as contributing in the restoration of the divine image and growth of faith in God), and 3) from the anthropic cosmological principle to the Christological cosmological principle. Nesteruk is concerned with the hypostasization of the created—indeed of the star dust of the cosmos—by the saints, for the universe is present within every atom of a saint. Ultimately, Nesteruk noted, Maximus' vision is not an astronomical vision. The universe is *in his heart*. We need to see God, and we need to understand the unity of the universe through this particular vision.

It cannot be surprising that such a panel provoked much discussion and questioning in its aftermath. Their Graces Bishop Ignatije and Bishop Atanasije asked questions of Yannaras. Bishop Atanasije thought that Yannaras did not emphasize enough the ontology of freedom and of love, for St Paul himself wrote, let whoever does not love the Lord Jesus, let him be an anathema. Both love and freedom are constitutive of beings, such that Christ is in the ontology of the Church; we cannot go beyond Christ. To this, Yannaras affirmed that salvation is existence without being compelled to existence, so it necessitates freedom. To a question asking what Maximus means by *grace*, Yannaras responds that *charis* (Gr. "grace") denotes a *tropos* (a "mode of being"). The professor noted that, whereas we have come to understand it as an uncreated energy, its original meeting is "something that is given." God's gift is real life. As a gift, we can accept or reject it. This, to Maximus, means that there are those who can live outside of grace. *Charis* is "the gift of life."

To a question about the difference between Gregory of Nyssa and Maximus, Mueller-Jourdan responded that, in Maximus' writings, life after life is *aeonic*. The gap between God and creation is unbridgeable. There is the possibility of having a union that does not have a confusion of natures, as witnessed in the Transfiguration, which is the participation of divine energy rather than divine essence.

The next panel included two Serbian hierarchs and the highly respected Fr. Andrew Louth. First to present was Bishop Ignatije of Braničevo, dogmatics and systematic theology professor at the Belgrade Faculty and bishop of Pozarevac and Branicevo. His talk, "The Roots of the Church According to St Maximus the Confessor: The Eschatological Community and Her Historical Establishment," examines two approaches to Maximus, the Biblical and the Origenistic. He notes that the Church always derives her existence based on future events, for example the coming of the Messiah or the coming of the *eschaton*. St Maximus holds firmly to a biblical perspective akin to St Ignatius who says that eating of the body of the Eucharist serves as a "medicine of immortality." Bishop Ignatije noted that Maximus takes Ignatius a step further in arguing that the Church is an icon of the age to come, and that we cannot live alone on communion, but that the Truth itself must become manifest, an event which is yet to come. In this way, Maximus rejects both Origenism and Platonism and formulates a new tradition. The ensuing implications of this notion in the modern day, Bishop Ignatije argued, strongly encourage that Christians fully understand that Holy Communion is critical for salvation. Without the manifestation of this aspect, even ascetic practice cannot lead one to salvation. And, importantly, *asceticism* is not about rejecting creation as evil but rejecting *egotism*.

"Despite an apparent paucity in the works of the Confessor on the subject," Fr. Andrew Louth presented on the institutional ecclesiology

of St Maximus. In his works, the Church, primarily liturgical in inspiration, is revealed as a hierarchy that is concerned with primacy. Louth argues that this notion of primacy is secondary to martyrdom as the cornerstone of his ecclesiology.

Bishop Maxim, professor of Patristics and Hagiology at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Belgrade, and Bishop of the Western American Diocese, as well as organizer for this Symposium, then followed with his paper, "Death, Resurrection, and the Church in Saint Maximus' Theology," where he examined Maximus' erotic-personal ontology of life leading to sacrifice and beyond, not stopping at the cross, but penetrating to the centrality of the Resurrection in the economy of salvation. Echoing the theme of the Symposium, Bishop Maxim notes that it is the Paschal experience that makes our existence comprehensible. He argues that, according to Maximus, the Resurrection alone permits knowledge of the purpose underlying all; central to this knowledge is the Eucharist as both Paschal experience and also the place where death (which is separation from God, and sin is the sting of death) is conquered and overcome.

What followed was a spirited discussion. In response to a question from Prof. Papanikolaou about the place of ethics, since it all seems to be about ontology, Vladika Maxim responded that the dichotomies that exist are superfluous but that the problem is real. The Church reality in the second half of last century consisted of some movements in Orthodox countries that over-emphasized human effort. On the semantic level, "ontological ethics" is a much better term. In St Maximus' thought there are different virtues, but if we do not experience the hypostatic reality of Christ in love, then we are condemned to continue in our moral struggles to find the essence of Christianity. Louth added that how we become what we are meant to be is the key. In the Western world this is lost, and we instead ask, "How do I do what I am meant to do?" Bp. Ignatije noted that God must become man, and we must unite with Him in order for us to live. It is not enough for the Incarnation only to occur.

Met. John Zizioulas remarked that Louth described the role of the hierarch like Dionysius (which is also how Maximus takes him), which shows the importance of the bishop to the Liturgy. However, what Maximus called the truth had to be confirmed by the institution of the

Council, of Ecumenical Councils. His own work had to be confirmed by the Sixth Council, therefore, councils are an indispensible part of what we call *truth*. So, we should not refer to Truth as disembodied from the "institution;" this is not what Maximus would have in mind. He also added that it is not Eucharistic theology that creates the mess in which the Orthodox find themselves today. Also, primacy is a natural consequence of Eucharistic theology. To this, Louth responded that he affirms the institution, but none are infallible.

Bishop Atanasije addressed Bishop Ignatije concerning a moment in his talk when he discussed monastics and ecclesiastical tradition as potentially polarizing. Bishop Atanasije noted that we cannot say that Maximus did not have ethics. Then we could say he had no dogmatics. He has both! It is clear that he has ethics. It is only bad if one chooses to think so. If there are ethics, there are ethics. Where they have gone is another question. Still we should save those words and concepts and use them. Some complain that modern theologians speak against ethics but, in Maximus, all things are very well balanced. To this, Bishop Ignatije noted that he did not say that every ethics is not good. However, our measures are not ethical by nature, but the true measure is Christ. He said that if we are to be open here, it goes beyond ethics. It cannot be characterized by ethics, which implies a law. Maximus was not a slave to Law. When we talk about ethics we should distinguish between that which is taught at universities and that which is thought in theological schools.

A lunch followed, after which Hieromonk Calinic Berger presented on "A Contemporary Synthesis of St Maximus' Theology: The Work of Fr. Dumitru Staniloae" and Paul Gavrilyuk of the University of St Thomas in St Paul, Minnesota spoke about "Georges Florovsky's Reading of Maximus: Anti-Bulgakov or Pro-Bulgakov?" This panel presented different appropriations of Maximus, by Staniloae and Florovsky respectively. Fr. Calinic noted the special place of Staniloae among Maximus interpreters, particularly in his devotion to the Church and commitment to not separating dogma from life. His use of Maximus was with knowledge, but was also balanced by an embrace of the Philokalic tradition that also animated Maximus, as well as contemporary ascetics. Gavrilyuk then concluded, noting that it is difficult to know how well Florovsky knew Maximus in the original, receiving Maximus as he did by way of Sergei Epifanovich's *St Maximus the Confessor and Byzantine*

Theology. What he did know in the original was Bulgakov, whose sophiology implied paganism, pantheism, and other problems to Florovsky. Gavrilyuk ground his paper in a comparison of Maximus' theory of the *logoi* and Bulgakov's sophiology.

For the final two talks, the Symposium moved to the University Hall of Belgrade University downtown. There, His Eminence John, Metropolitan of Pergamon began his address by graciously noting that, for years he has been saying that Serbia is a center—it may be *the* center—for Orthodox theology for our time. By this, he means creative theology that takes theology and applies it to actual life and reality. Without any hesitation, Met. John expressed his admiration for the theological work that has taken place in this country and in this Church.

In his talk, "Person and Nature in St Maximus' Ontology," Met. John noted that St Maximus is the subject of extensive discussion in our time. He is an example of the wide, all-embracing area of theology. Yet, there are different ways to approach him and the present paper engaged with him in the context of nature and person. Met. John defined terms and clarified the Cappadocian teaching on nature and hypostasis. He described the *gnomic* will as the will particular. It is involved in sin and sinfulness, but it is not sinful. It plays a decisive role in deification. It can lead us to good as well as to bad.

Met. John, seemingly responding to Jean-Claude Larchet, affirmed that there is no necessity in nature. He noted that all theologians should be doing the work of helping us know how Maximus would reply if he was asked a modern question. Today, postmodernist tendencies threaten anything associated with nature. Modern existentialist thought puts so much emphasis on the person's freedom. The only experience available to modern man who has rejected Christ is nature in its fallen state. In Christ, freedom is not freedom from nature, but freedom *for nature*.

Bishop Atanasije, speaking on "The Mystery of Christ in St Maximus' Theology," was not at all mysterious about the principal influences on St Maximus: it is the Bible, especially the works of St John and St Paul. The "Mystery of Christ" is not a common mystery. It is an event that is a Person, Christ Himself, which is the greatest gift of God to all creation, especially to humanity. The Gospel is the eternal living Word of God. His Grace noted that Sartre once said that he did not believe in God because He would have to create Himself. That is what God did

with Christ. That is the Truth. That is the Reality we call Christ. There is no God apart from Christ and the Father of Christ.

Bishop Atanasije note that a couple years ago when there was an attempt at union with Monophysites, there was an effort to recuperate Severus of Antioch, but for Maximus, he was the one who led them into schism. Man is called by God to perpetuate the Gospel and to *incarnate* the Gospel. Maximus is a living brother of Christ. He is the same Christ, many and One at the same time, and that is the Mystery of the Church. For Maximus, the Gospel is his poem about the Beloved: Christ. Bishop Atanasije strongly implied that should be so for all who would wet their feet in the deep waters of theology. For the power of the Resurrection, through which we can know everything, is known through the Evangel.

The Symposium concluded on Sunday with the Hierarchical Liturgy and consecration of the new church of St Maximus in Kostolac, about 80 kilometers from Belgrade. Thereafter, the participants had lunch at the church and then visited the ruins of the Roman town and fortress of Viminacium before concluding the pilgrimage at the still-active medieval monastery of Ravanica.

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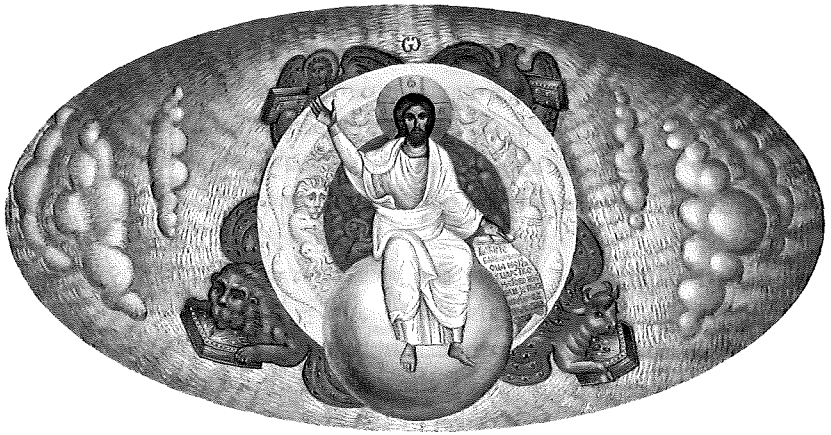
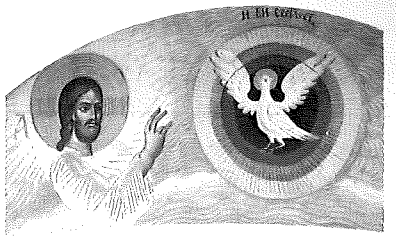
It is fitting to conclude with a consideration of the frescoes that were begun in 2006 and completed in 2010, to which the Symposium attendees and participants were treated during the Divine Liturgy that accompanied the consecration of the church at the conclusion of the Symposium. The frescoes are a pictorial cycle representing the theology of the Confessor, which is, of course, the theology of the Church. Other frescoes are due to follow. Bishop Ignatije (Midić) of Branicevo, a specialist in Saint Maximus who penned a thesis on his ecclesiology at the University of Athens, masterminded the approach to depicting visually St Maximus' teachings.





The Theological Interpretation of the Frescoes of the Church of Saint Maximus the Confessor in Kostolac, Serbia

Fr Stamatis Skliris

The wall-painting consists of three parts, which must be viewed together because, as three niches of a triconch, they combine and lead to one another. The interpretation starts from the side niches (apses) and leads from the apse to the Sanctuary. Each of the side apses represents one historical fact, which will find its ultimate meaning in the Eschaton, i.e., in the after-history, which is depicted in the Sanctuary's apse. The north niche is symbolized by Alpha1 and the south by Alpha2, because they prefigure the End. The middle niche is above the Sanctuary and is denoted by Ω (Omega), because it represents the Eschaton to which the other niches lead.

North or left niche (A1)

Here the Son and Word of God the Father creates the world, galaxies, planets, etc. The planets of this composition are in agreement with the large planet earth depicted in the eastern apse of the Sanctuary, designated "Ω" above. The Creator is represented as blessing by the two hands, standing on the left side of the apse and look to the right side of the apse, where the planet Earth is, on which top are seated Adam and Eve. From Christ's creative hand to Adam and Eve there are four different phases of the earth: a) The earth as invisible and unconstructed, b) the land with fish, the first form of life that emerged from the water, c) with trees and birds (one on loan from Exupery's Little Prince) and fi-

nally d) earth with grass and flowers with Adam and Eve. Again it is worth noting that the "historic land" is more naturalistic, while the land on the eastern apse Ω shines like gold, whereby the eschatological logos (λόγος), is implied, which is to become not only the throne of the temporary and earthen Adam, but of Christ the new Adam. Here the theology of St Maximus on the logoi of beings is manifest: both the earth and man have one logos (reason), which is stable and divine and will be transparent in the eschaton (at the last times). The earth will not remain one single planet – not merely Adam's throne – but the Kingdom will be revealed as the throne of Christ – the Judge of History. Man in history is not in the fullness of his existence. He is humic, mortal, and inconstant. His raison d'etre becomes evident in the eschaton where he will be revealed as risen and eternal. All the intermediate stages are the transient modes of existence of beings. Therefore, when viewed together, niche A1 and Ω lay bare the present condition; they also perceptualize in painterly fashion the theory of St Maximus on logos and mode (tropos).

Southern right or niche (A2)

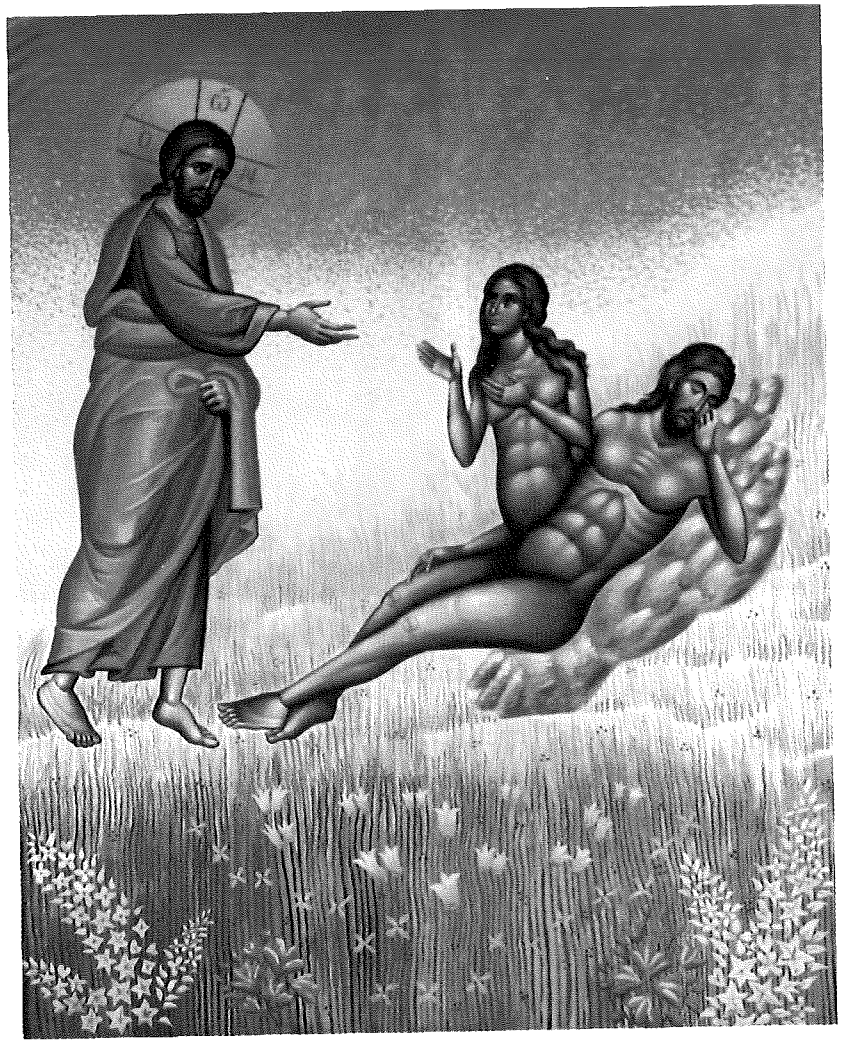
It consists of two zones, each one in its own way prefiguring the Eschaton of the central apse.

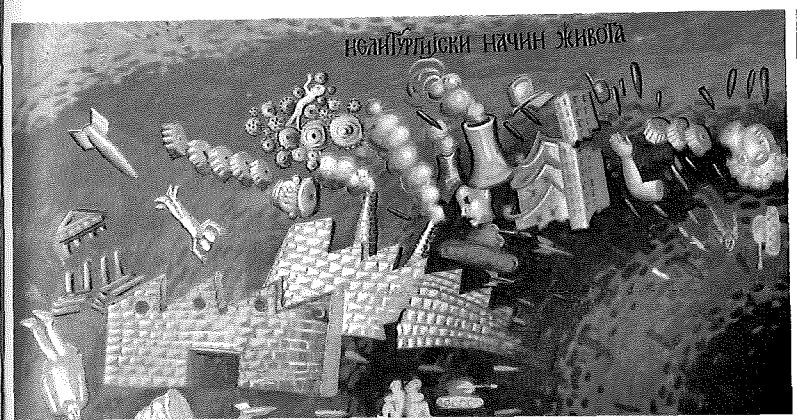
Upper zone: Christ as High Priest serves the eternal Divine Liturgy before the heavenly altar. It is a liturgical imaging of the Kingdom.

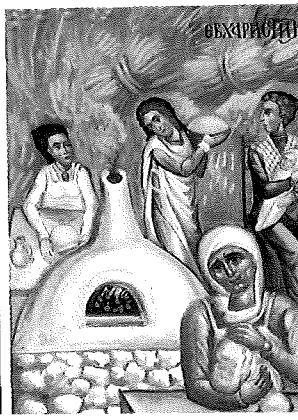
Bottom zone: Christ at the eternal Dinner (not the historic "Last Supper" that prefigures the eternal) with his fellow diners: the apostles, and men, women, and children who take part by offering each one of them the gifts for the eternal Dinner. The South christ Christ descending in glorious resurrectional manner from the place where He ascended into heaven.

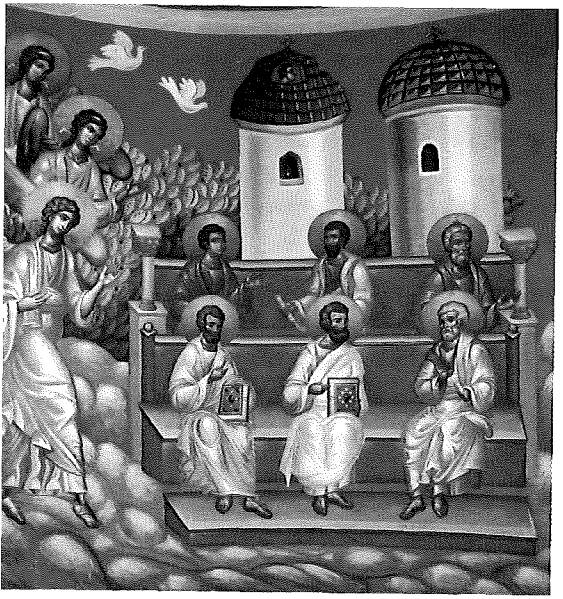
Eastern or central apse Ω

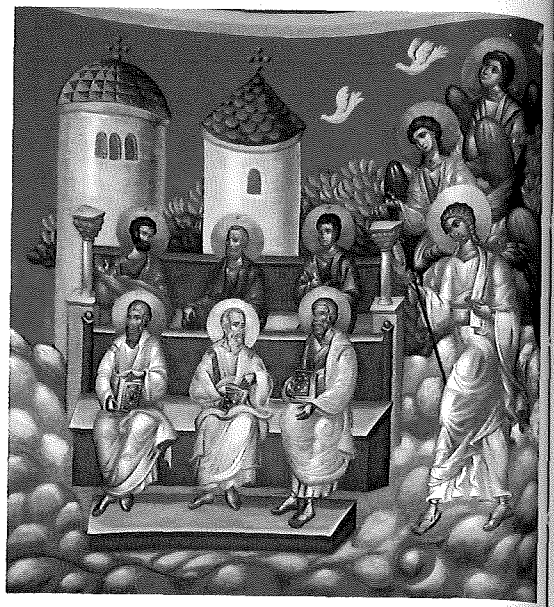
In this fresco, Christ as Judge descends from heaven and is seated on his throne, which is the earth but not as it was depicted in Creation as a natural planet, but transformed into a golden sphere (this theme already exists in the mosaics of Ravenna and Sicily). He is surrounded by the "new heaven" with surrealistic clouds and the four symbols of the Evangelists. Close to His feet are the Virgin and the Baptist, and seated

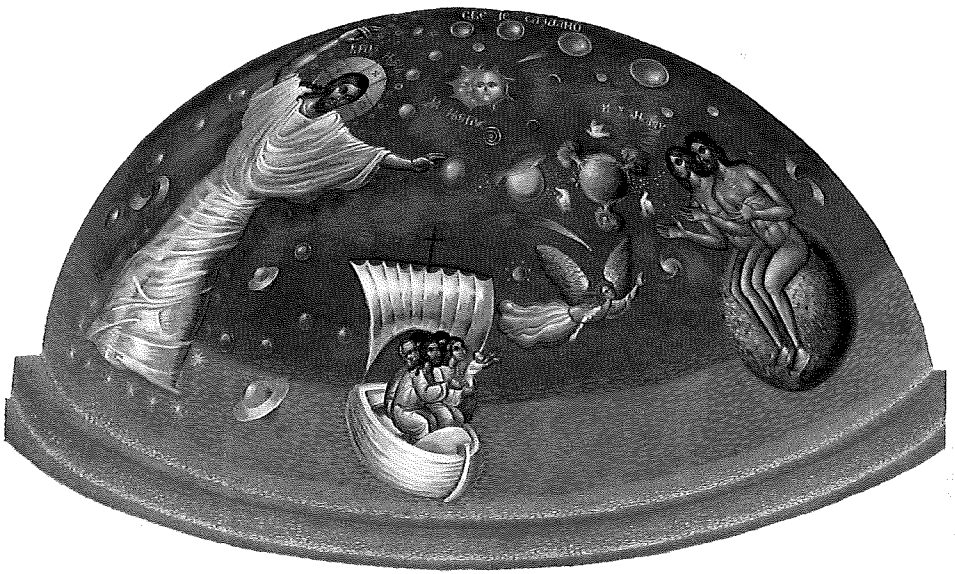












on the thrones are the Holy Apostles, Angels, behind which can be seen the "many habitations" of Paradise. Clearly, here is summarized the whole plan of salvation in Christ, according to the teaching of St Maximus, and they are all depicted in the niches A1 (Creation) and A2 (Eucharist), proving altogether that in the Eschaton everything will find its real logos and the eternal and immutable mode (tropos).

Liturgical and Non-Liturgical Lifestyle
(Portrayal of Hell)

The local bishop proposed to the iconographer that he present two ways of life: the Eucharistic and non-Eucharistic one, with the goal to allow the ontology of St Maximus to be transpired in a painterly way. The two themes were painted in the Kostolac church below the south (right) apse. We have already remarked on the upper tier depicting the eternal Feast of the Kingdom, where women, men and children offer their gifts for the dinner. On the left side below it are depicted the preparations for the performing and participation in it, while in the bottom right is shown a way of life unrelated to the Eucharist.

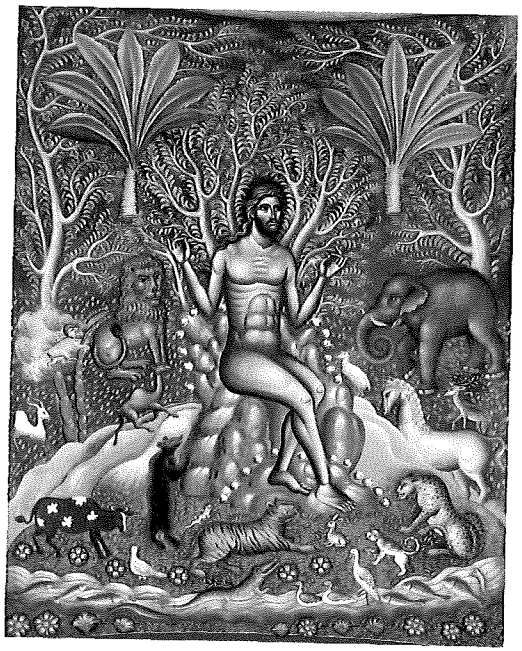
Left: Wheat fields with bales and ears of grain prefigure the Bread of Life. Women carry flour and other fruits. A grandmother kneads dough that will be offered in the Eucharist. A boy and girl work in a vineyard, where grapes are pressed so that they may become the "Nama", the wine of the Eucharist, which, as we said, is painted above the scene.

Right: *Proposal for an ontological and not allegorical representation of Hell.* Within a crimson background evoking the Lord's Day and with the related symbols of fire etc., are factories producing pollution, tanks, shells, bombs and generally those human activities that express hatred and the desire to exterminate the other. These are "those who hate," mentioned by St Maximus. Some negative relationships between people are also painted, such as a couple turned back-to-back, unable to achieve a loving relationship. Elsewhere, someone is depicted with his head down. Others try desperately to escape a system of entrapping gears. In the right corner of the composition, the red color of the background darkens, alters to purple and becomes like a black hole. A factory shrinks and darkens close to the black hole, threatening to disap-

pear into it. The scene is marred by a landscape riddled with shells, tanks, and bombs. The beings diminish and become obscure according to the logic that refers to how demons are depicted in Christian iconography unlighted and shriveled.

We have here a painterly formulation of the teaching of St Maximus about those who love and those who hate. Until now, the traditional image of hell was a fiery river of sinners leading to the dragon that swallows them. This imagery consists of symbols borrowed from pagan antiquity. Here we have another visual vocabulary, not metaphoric or allegorical. This one is freed from the platonic influence on Greco-Roman art, from which the Christian iconography is in debt. We would say that here at work is the ontological power of the words of St Paul in 1Cor 3:11-15:

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.



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The Belgrade Symposium brought together the following speakers: Demetrios Bathrellos, Grigory Benevitch, Calinic Berger, Paul Blowers, David Bradshaw, Adam Cooper, Brian Daley, Paul Gavrilyuk, Atanasije Jevtić, Joshua Lollar, Andrew Louth, John Panteleimon Manoussakis, Maximos of Simonopetra, Ignatije Midić, Pascal Mueller-Jourdan, Alexei Nesteruk, Aristotle Papanikolaou, George Parsenios, Philipp Gabriel Renczes, Nino Sakvarelidze, Torstein Tollefsen, George Varvatsoulias, Maxim Vasiljević, Christos Yannaras, and John Zizioulas.

The papers and discussions in this volume of the proceedings of the Belgrade Symposium amply attest to the reputation of Saint Maximus the Confessor as the most universal spirit of the seventh century, and perhaps the greatest thinker of the Church. Twenty eight studies have been gathered in the present volume, which is organized into eight chapters, each of them corresponding to the proceedings of the Symposium, all of which are of intense interest and importance. Chapter One brings to light new evidence regarding the sources, influences, and appropriations of St Maximus' teaching. His mediatorial role as one of the few genuinely ecumenical theologians of the patristic era is acknowledged and affirmed. Chapter Two offers some crucial clarifications on the relationship between person, nature, and freedom. In Chapter Three we find substantial discussion on body, pathos, love, eros, etc. New interpretive paradigms and insights are proposed in Chapter Four, while the next chapter presents the Confessor's cosmological perspective in light of modern scientific discoveries. Some important ontological and ecclesiological issues are discussed in Chapter Six, while in Chapter Seven we are able to see what contemporary synthesis is possible through St Maximus' thought. Chapter Eight offers further readings by engaging younger scholars who did not present their papers at the conference but whose studies were accepted by the organizers. In the final paper we find an important overview of the Symposium with a description of the conference's flow and a theological interpretation of the frescoes of the Church of Saint Maximus the Confessor in Kostolac, Serbia.

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Knowing the Purpose of Creation Through
Symposium on St Maximus the Confessor, B
by Bishop Maxim (Vasiljević), Sebastian Press & The Faculty of Orthodox Theology - University of Belgrade 2013.

The present volume is a collection of presentations delivered at the St Maximus the Confessor International Symposium held in Belgrade at the University of Belgrade from 18 to 21 October 2012.

The primary motivation for organizing this Symposium arose from a desire to suitably honor the commemoration in 2012 of the 1350th anniversary of the repose of St Maximus the Confessor. Inspired by the enthusiasm and support of many scholars, the Department of Patristic Studies of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology of the University of Belgrade in Serbia, in collaboration with the Orthodox Christian Studies Program of Fordham University, organized this international symposium on Saint Maximus under the title: "Knowing the Purpose of Creation through the Power of the Resurrection." The title of the conference is based on Saint Maximus' words in his *Centuries on Theology and Economy* (1.66): He who is initiated into the inexpressible power of the Resurrection apprehends the purpose for which God first established everything.

A second incentive for the conference, equally important for the organizers, was the awareness that 32 years have passed since the epochal event of that first-ever symposium on St Maximus the Confessor, held in Fribourg, Switzerland, September 2-5, 1980.

In the last decades of the twentieth century, patristic studies as a whole, and the study of various aspects of the theology of Maximus the Confessor in particular, have grown exponentially. Interest in the great Confessor crosses confessional lines. He has become a central point of reference in Orthodox-Catholic dialogue. A major theologian of the Byzantine Church, Saint Maximus is venerated in both Eastern and Western Christian traditions as a theologian of Incarnation and Resurrection in his deepest intuitions. One of the goals of the Belgrade Symposium was therefore to continue the work of the Fribourg Symposium not only by summarizing the current state of Maximian scholarship as it exists in the early twenty first century, but also by highlighting those ecumenical and eirenic elements of St Maximus' teaching that cross confessional lines, and further by drawing on the multi-dimensional light of his theology to engage the issues that are relevant for our time now and into the foreseeable future.

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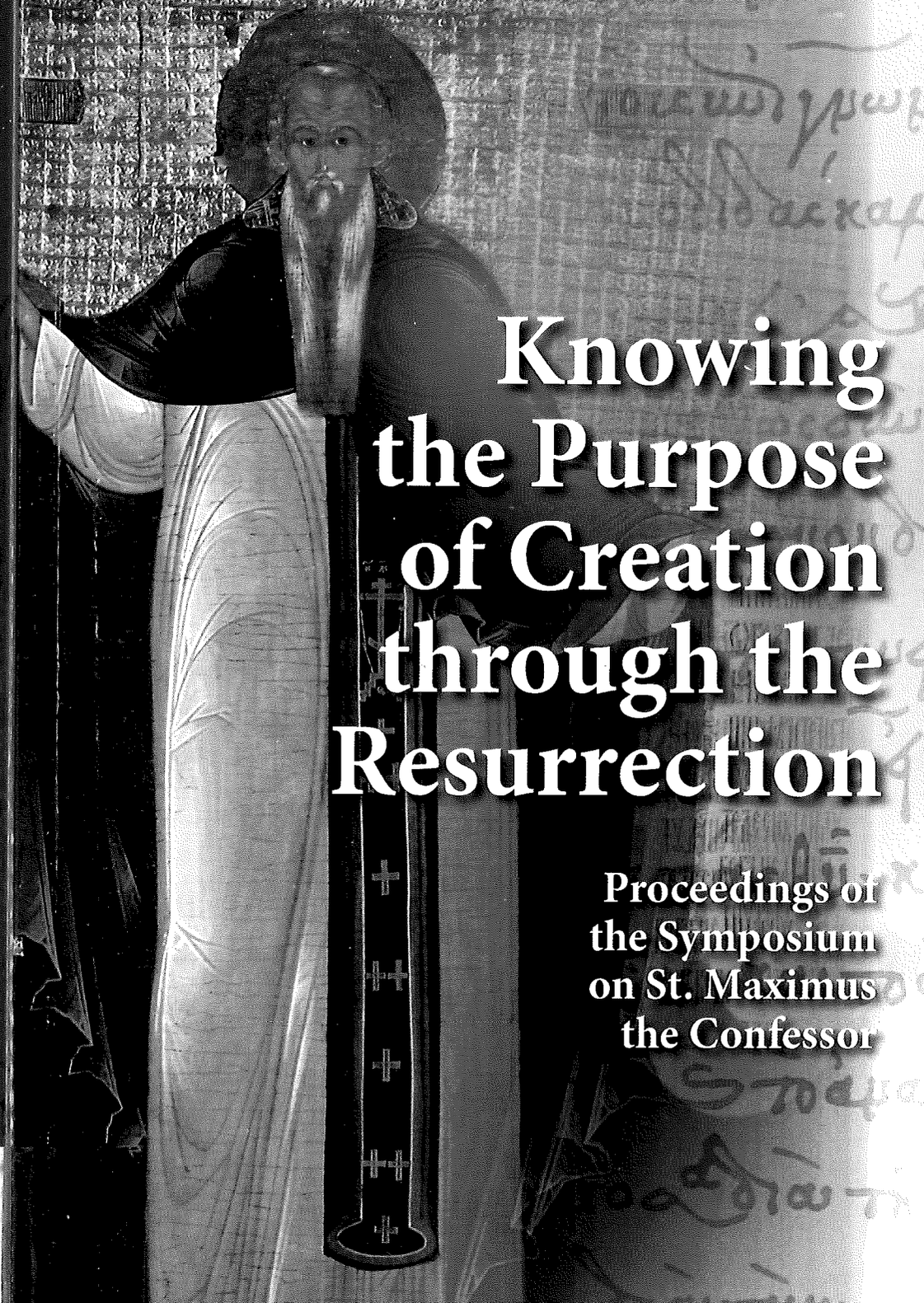

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